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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

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from woodland glades to alpine gems

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How to compost
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EDITOR'S LETTER

There was a time when almost every town of importance in the north of England had its own Florists' Society devoted to the cultivation of a single type of flower. Of the hundreds that once flourished, only the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society now remains. The flowers grown by its members are no ordinary tulips. Known as English Florists' tulips, they are beautifully complex; feathered and flamed, and each flower is as unique and different as a fingerprint. Once a tulip 'breaks' its patterning persists and in the petals of these flowers runs the bloodline of the first Florists' tulips grown in 1877 by John Rea and John Evelyn. Tulip enthusiast Anna Pavord visits ahead of the Society's 184th annual show.

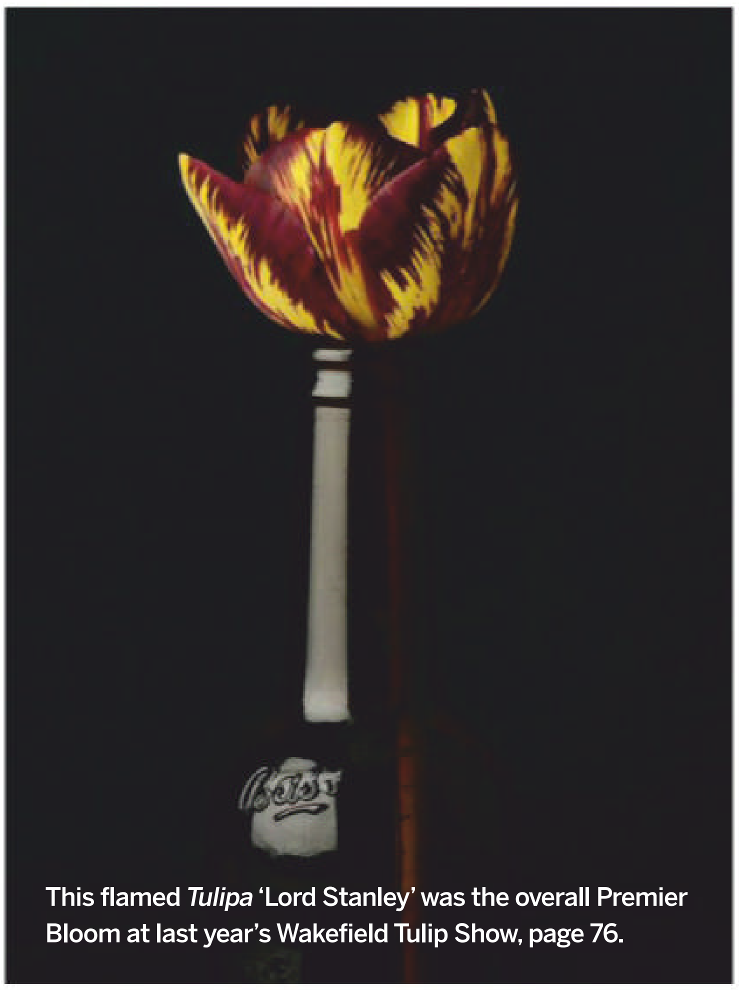
Many of us know about traditional methods of composting, using a mixture of leafy greens and woody browns, regularly turned. Composting also has a role to play in reducing landfill waste and, although some councils do collect garden and food waste, this all requires fuel, energy and transport. As more of us live in towns and cities with smaller gardens with limited space for a compost heap, head gardener Joshua Sparkes considers alternative methods of composting that work in smaller spaces.

Make a note this month to look out for *Pots of Style*, a new special edition from *Gardens Illustrated* with 40 inspiring ideas for beautifully planted containers for throughout the year. From spring's delicate early risers to the intense hues of late summer, it is full of plants and planting combinations. It also includes plenty of practical tips from our favourite head gardeners and recommendations for the best new gardening kit.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



This flamed *Tulipa* 'Lord Stanley' was the overall Premier Bloom at last year's Wakefield Tulip Show, page 76.

JASON INGRAM

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JASON INGRAM

Fresh planting ideas from designer Ulf Nordfjell in a garden on the coast of Sweden, page 68.

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COVER IMAGE

Tulip displays at Malverleys by Jason Ingram

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Join us for a special midsummer supper in the company of designer Jinny Blom, and enjoy a sneak peek at the nurseries of growers Hortus Loci – page 9
- Book now for our long weekend in Normandy with an expert-guided tour of the exquisite gardens surrounding Varengeville-sur-Mer – page 10
- Save money when you take out a digital subscription to *Gardens Illustrated* – page 32
- Save 10% on your plant orders at Sarah Raven† – page 119
- *Gardens Illustrated* subscribers get free p&p when they order the new *Pots of Style* special edition – page 122

† Reader offer open to UK residents only.

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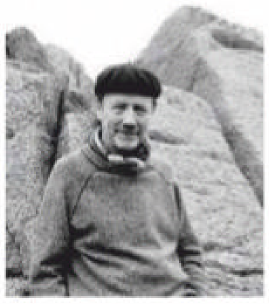

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

CHARLIE HOPKINSON
Charlie, who has shot every Who's Who portrait since 1993, photographs Nicola Spence, page 66. *"Give me a gardener any day, they're wonderful subjects."*

MATTHEW BIGGS
Matthew profiles the genus *Pulmonaria* for us, page 44. *"What a pleasure to focus on pulmonarias for flower and foliage, one of the greatest joys of the garden in spring."*

AARON BERTELSEN
Great Dixter's gardener cook, Aaron shows us how to get ahead with sowing seeds this spring, page 91. *"Everyone can grow something to bring to the supper table."*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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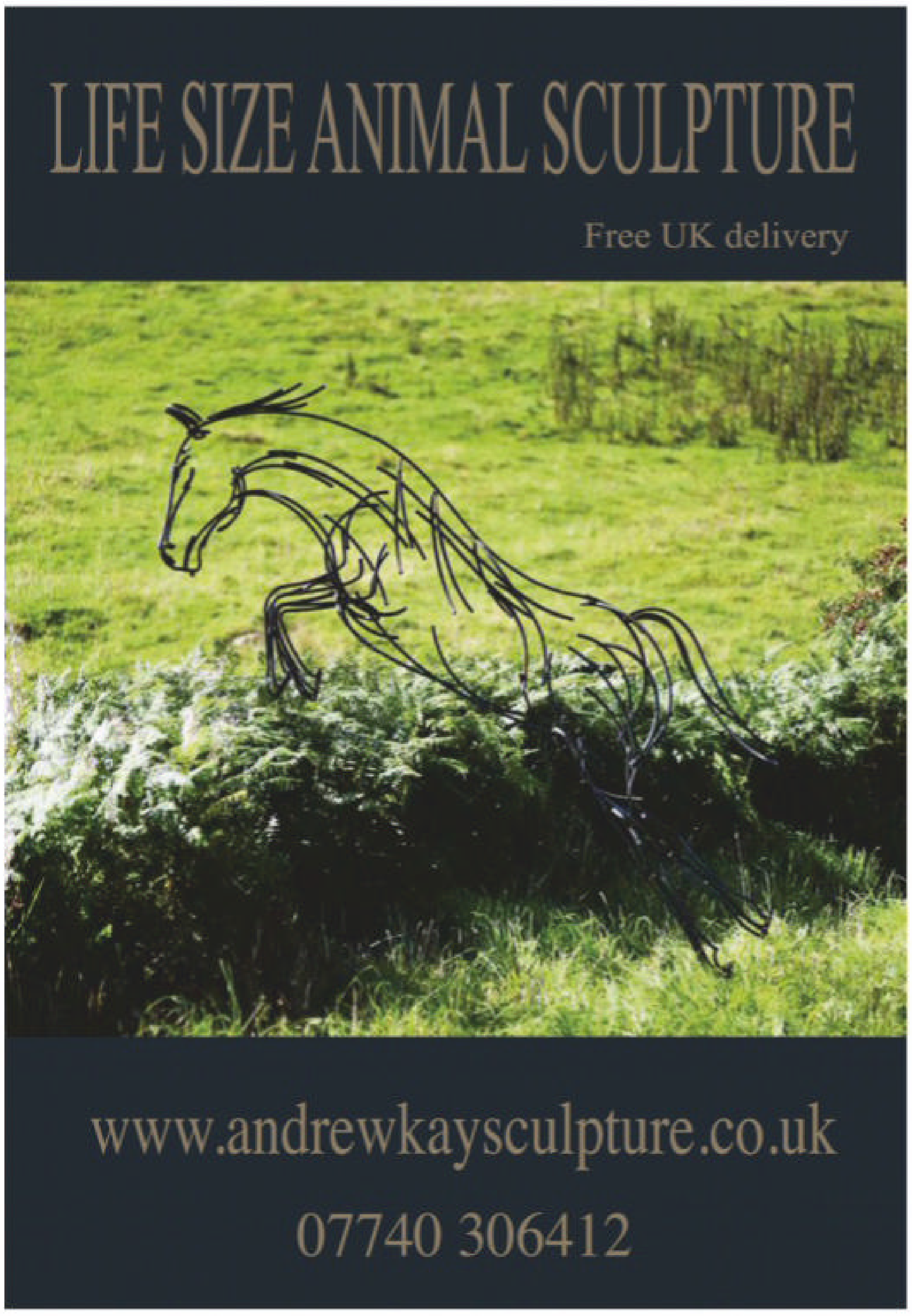
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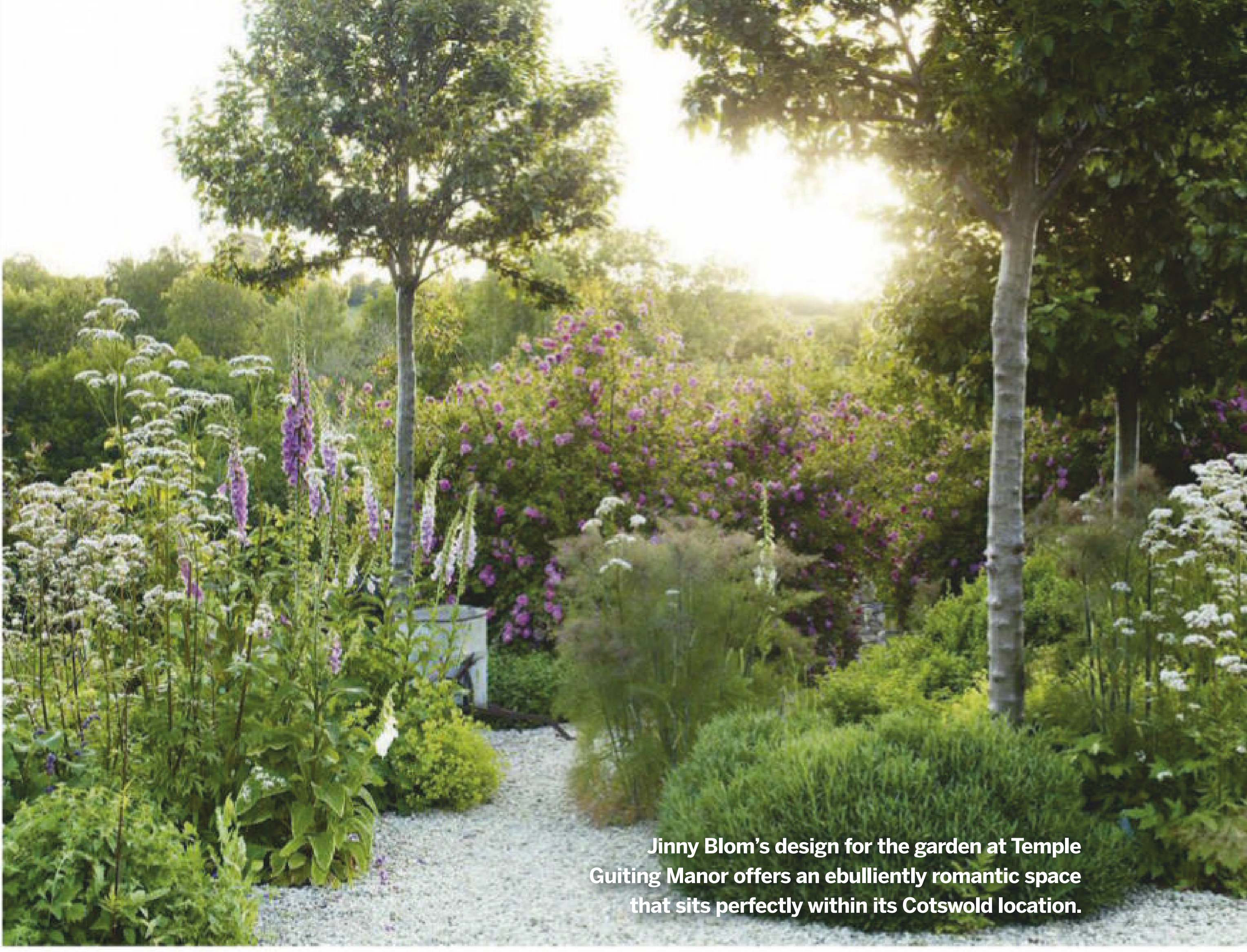
THE SPEAKERS

Jinny Blom is an eclectic designer whose gardens include a Chelsea gold-winning show garden for Prince Harry, a rugged, naturalistic estate in Scotland, a wildlife-focussed retreat in Kenya and romantic Cotswold manor house gardens. Her recent book *The Thoughtful Gardener* called for a more intelligent approach to garden design.

Mark Straver and Robin Wallis set up Hortus Loci in 2011. The nursery has become known for its expertise in sourcing a wide range of plants from around the world and working with designers to supply plants for their show gardens in particular at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.



Jinny Blom's design for the garden at Temple Guiting Manor offers an ebulliently romantic space that sits perfectly within its Cotswold location.

SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2019

MIDSUMMER GARDEN SUPPER CLUB WITH JINNY BLOM

We celebrate the long summer evenings with a special seasonal dinner and talk from award-winning designer Jinny Blom at The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci

Hosted by *Gardens Illustrated* and the expert plantspeople at **The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci** in Hampshire, our midsummer celebration starts in the late afternoon. There will be time for refreshments when you arrive before taking a tour of the nursery, to take a peek at some of the plants being grown ready for their starring roles at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Show. There will also be the opportunity to browse the nursery and make your own plant selections before enjoying a pre-dinner drink. Dinner will be prepared for us by The Hobo.co artisan kitchen, to reflect the season and all that midsummer has to offer, with fresh flavours inspired by local produce and a nod to traditional Scandinavian celebrations. The evening's finale will be a talk from award-winning designer **Jinny Blom**, who will tell us about her very varied recent commissions. She'll discuss her approach to planting design, art and architecture and some of the projects both here in the UK and abroad that she is currently working on.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY, ©NATHAL E JOUAN

EVENT DETAILS

Price £100 per person

Date Saturday 22 June, 2019.
Venue The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci,
Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Programme
4.30pm Refreshments and welcome introduction
5pm Tour of the nursery
5.45pm Return to the plant centre for drinks and opportunity to buy plants
6.30pm Dinner served
8.15pm Talk from award-winning designer Jinny Blom
9pm Concludes

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary or accessibility requirements.

TO BOOK

Online gardensillustrated.com/events
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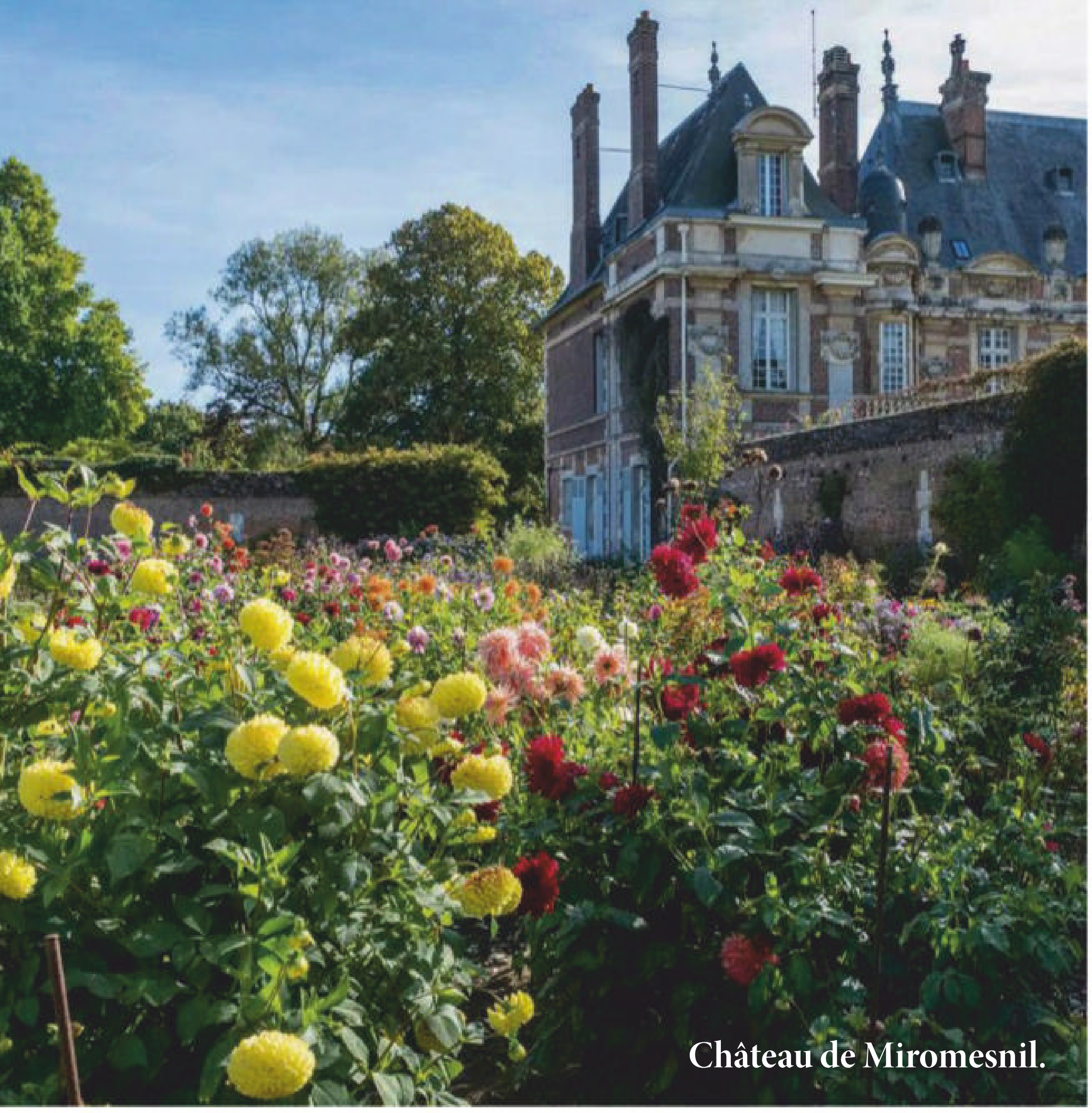
Château de Miromesnil.

Le Jardin Plume.

27-30 SEPTEMBER 2019

GARDENS OF NORMANDY

Take a long weekend to Normandy's La Côte d'Albâtre to discover exceptional gardens from the historic to the newly created

TOUR LEADER
Horticulturist **Maïté Delmas** has managed plant collections at the botanic gardens in Kew, Bordeaux and Paris. She is an active promoter of the international network Botanic Gardens of France, and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur for her 36 years of service at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturell. She is joined by Sophie Piebenga, historic gardens expert.

We travel to northern France for a four-day tour of some of Normandy's best-loved gardens. Our base in Dieppe puts us within easy reach of the village of **Varengeville-sur-Mer**, which boasts five exceptional gardens, including the gardens of **Bois des Moutiers**, a Lutyens/Jekyll collaboration where we will also be invited to view the house with a tour by the owners. **Le Vasterival** is the creation of the late Princess Greta Sturdza who created a woodland garden in the Gardenesque style. The Princess famously continued with the development of her garden right up to her death at the age of 94 in 2009. Other gardens include **Château de Miromesnil** with a charming walled potager, **Shamrock** with its remarkable collection of hydrangeas, **Jardin Agapanthe**, a densely planted garden defined by a powerful structure and **Le Jardin Plume**, where rustic charm meets French formality. As a finale to the trip, we also include a visit to an exceptional, private, modern woodland garden, which has been described as 'the most exciting new garden in Europe' – ensuring that our trip to Normandy is a delight for all garden lovers.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing: £2,160 (a single supplement of £200 is levied by the hotel).

Price includes: three nights accommodation at Hotel la Presidence, Mercure; three lunches, three evening meals with wine at local restaurants in Dieppe plus, return tickets on Eurostar and all transport during the tour. If you wish to travel independently to join the tour in Dieppe, please deduct £100 and contact the office to discuss joining arrangements. The price does not include hotel extras or travel insurance.

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DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

SOPHISTICATED PALETTE

High-end glasshouse manufacturer Alitex has launched a new paint collection inspired by plants, nature, natural materials and the Sussex landscape where the family firm is based. Designed to pair with Alitex's glasshouse colours, the paints are available in 15 shades, including Wood Sage, Sussex Emerald and Passiflora. Each colour is available as exterior and interior eggshell, masonry, full gloss and chalky matt for interior use. Prices start at £25 for 1 litre, £47.50 for 2.5 litres and £85 for 5 litres. **mandlpaints.com**

JULIA CURRIE

News

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NATIONAL GARDENING WEEK

Edible Britain is the theme for this year's National Gardening Week and the Royal Horticultural Society is encouraging gardeners across the country to join together to celebrate the joy of growing your own produce. There's still time to sow carrot, beetroot and other hardy plants, as well as half-hardy but quick-growing plants such as courgettes and basil. To get involved, register an event online or search the NGW calendar to find an event near you to visit and take part in. You can also share what you're doing to mark the week-long initiative by posting on social media using #NationalGardeningWeek. Full details at **rhs.org.uk**

BANISH THE BLUES

With luminous violet-blue flowers, *Lunaria annua* 'Corfu Blue' is a beautiful addition to the spring garden with delicate, long- lasting flowers that are followed by attractive seedpods. Normally hard to find, this honesty has just been added to the Chiltern Seed catalogue priced at £2.95 per pack. **chilternseeds.co.uk**

Beyond the garden gate

The walled garden at Eythrope in Buckinghamshire was originally created in 1875 by Alice de Rothschild, who was famous for using pioneering techniques, such as three-dimensional carpet bedding. Redesigned in the 1990s by garden designer Mary Keen, it is now a productive garden for the restaurant at nearby Waddesdon Manor, the former home of the Rothschild family. It is usually closed to the public but this year there's the chance to tour this private garden on Wednesdays from 15 May to 16 October. Tours lasts 90 minutes and include either a two-course lunch or afternoon tea. For more details or to book your tour call 01296 820414 or visit **waddesdon.org.uk**

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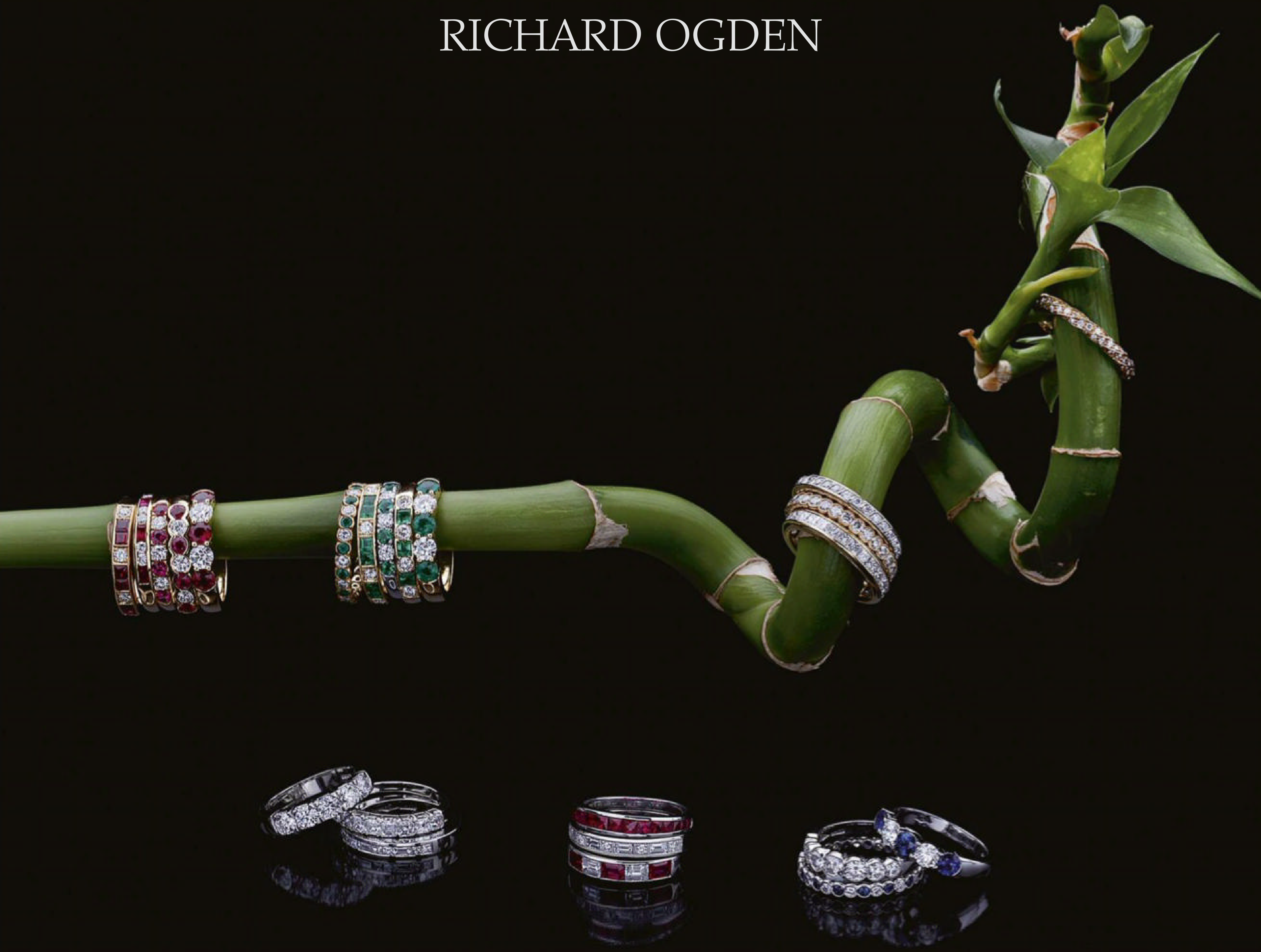
RICHARD OGDEN



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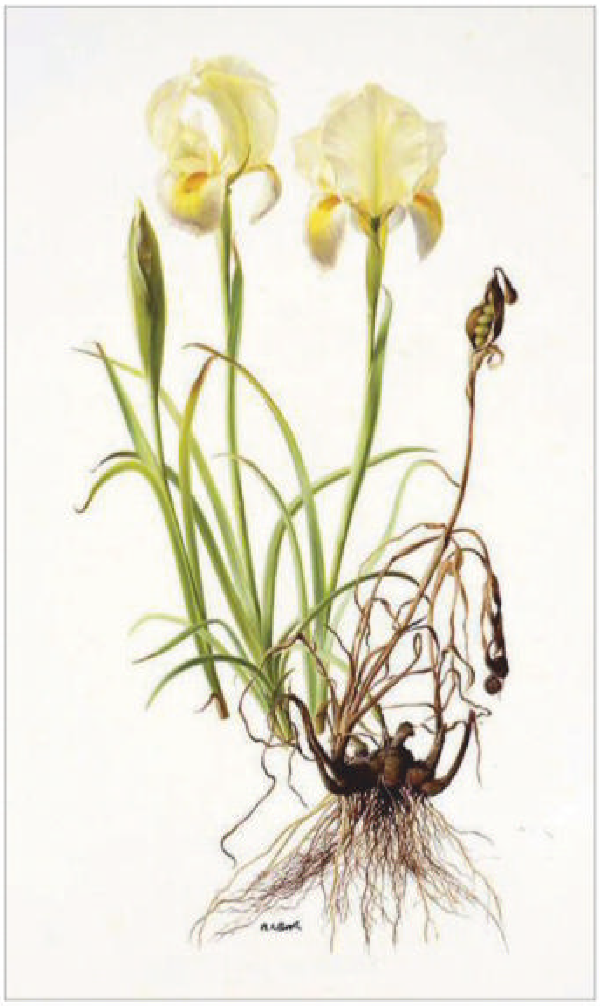
ARTIST PLANTSMAN

Although a reclusive character who rarely left Yorkshire, botanical and natural history artist Raymond Booth (1929-2015) had an extensive and international career. Skilled as a plantsman as well as an artist, Booth grew plants in his garden to paint in his studio; a personal sanctuary where no one but himself was allowed to enter. His intricate paintings have been brought together for *Raymond Booth 1929-2015: Detailing Nature*, an exhibition at the Watts Contemporary Gallery near Guildford in Surrey. Proceeds from the sale of his artwork will be shared between three charitable trusts. Until 22 April. **wattsgallery.org.uk**

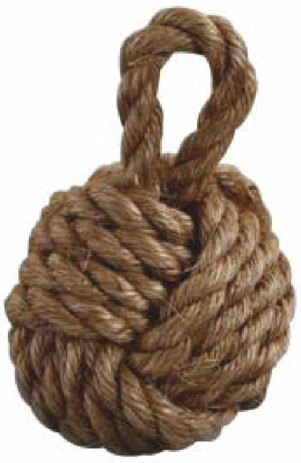


GREAT DIXTER PLANTS

Great Dixter Spring Plant Fair

For the first time Avon Bulbs will join the specialist nurseries exhibiting at Great Dixter's Spring Plant Fair, held in the beautiful gardens in East Sussex over the weekend of 6-7 April. Nurseries at the fair include Beth Chatto Gardens, Wildegoose Nursery and Phoenix Perennial Plants. As well as browsing the rare and unusual plants for sale, listen out for the bell ringing, which signals the start of a short talk by one of the nursery owners on their stall, telling you about some of their most interesting plants. Tickets cost £10. **greatdixter.co.uk**

3 FOR THE GARDEN… DOOR STOPS



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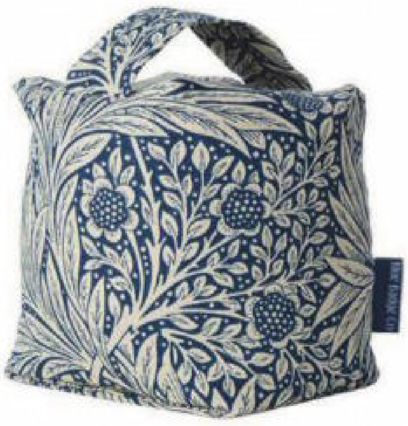

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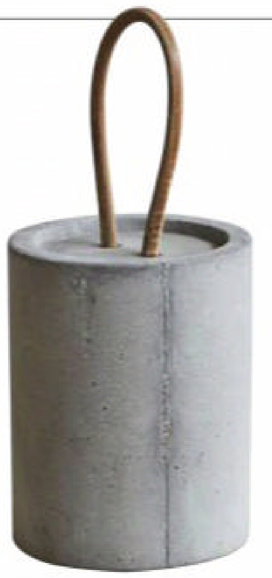

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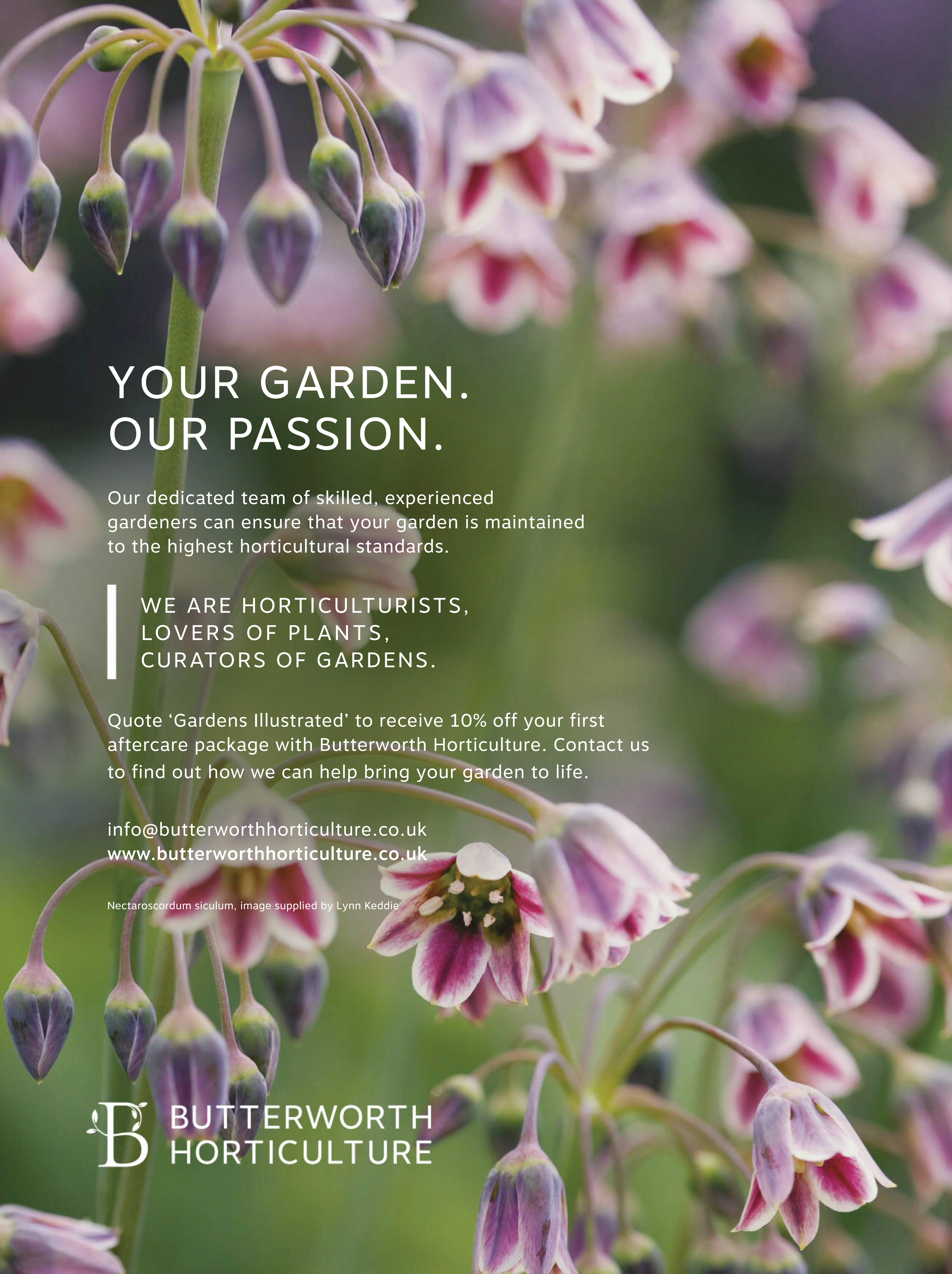

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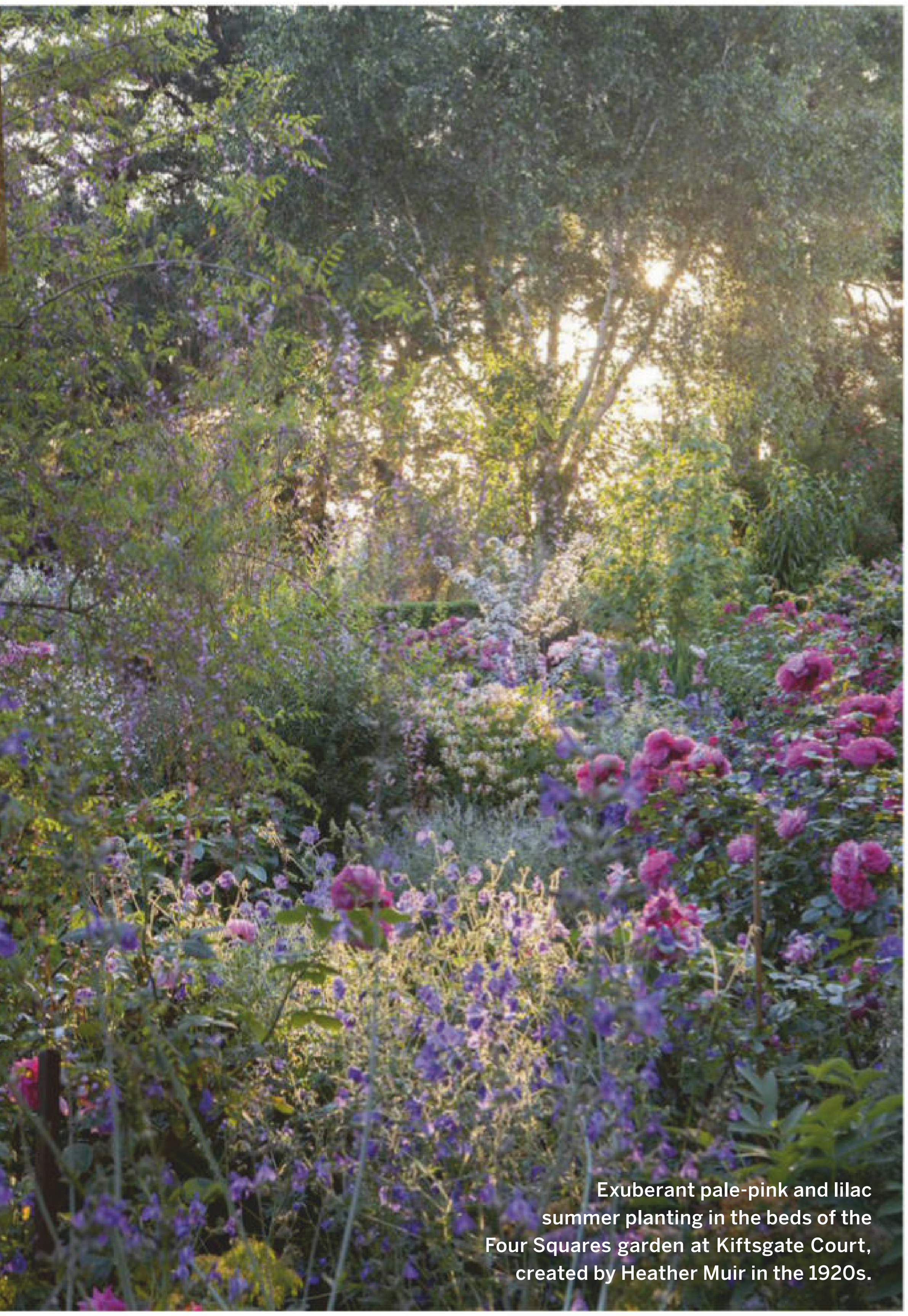
THE POWER OF THREE

A new exhibition at London's Garden Museum, Kiftsgate Court Gardens: 100 years of Women Gardeners, *celebrates three women who helped shaped the Gloucestershire garden, best known for its roses. Bringing together family archives, new seasonal photography and film, the exhibition looks at the contributions of Heather Muir (pictured above right with her daughters) who took on the gardens in 1919, her daughter Diany Binny who added the Italianate garden, and granddaughter Anne Chambers, who created a water garden and wildflower corner. 9 April – 9 June. Admission included in the £10 museum entry fee.* **gardenmuseum.org.uk**



Exuberant pale-pink and lilac summer planting in the beds of the Four Squares garden at Kiftsgate Court, created by Heather Muir in the 1920s.

THE FOUR SQUARES AND TERRACE, KIFTSGATE COURT: SABINA RUBER/HEATHER MUIR WITH DAUGHTERS: KIFTSGATE COURT ARCHIVES

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Thanks to its removable stake, the KitSound Diggit Outdoor Speaker is perfect for gardeners who want to listen to their favourite playlist or gardening podcast while working in the garden. Not only does the stake provide stability; the added height paired with the cylinder-shaped design produces 360-degree sound. The speaker has a natural wood finish, connects via Bluetooth up to 10m, and is water, dust and sand resistant. The rechargeable battery lasts up to eight hours. It costs £39.99 from **kitsound.co.uk**

ALL TOOLED UP

Heritage tool company Burgon & Ball has launched a new container gardening collection including a weeder (£11.99) with a compact head and inward-turned blade to protect plants from damage; a scoop (£14.99) whose collar helps prevent compost from spilling; and a root and transplanting knife (£16.99) with a serrated edge. All three are made from steel and have FSC-certified wood handles. **burgonandball.com**

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❶ **Leonardslee Gardens**
Explore the collection of rare and endangered rhododendrons and azaleas amassed by Sir Edmund Loder at Leonardslee Gardens in West Sussex. The garden is reopening this month for the first time in almost a decade. Now under new ownership, it has been lovingly restored. From April 2019. £12.50. Leonardslee Gardens, Brighton Road, Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6PP. Tel 01403 220345, leonardsleegardens.co.uk

❷ **Henry Moore Drawings: The Art of Seeing**
Visit the former home of artist Henry Moore and enjoy an exhibition looking into the variety of ways he used drawing in his work, and how it was often the starting point for the sculptures, for which Moore was most famous. 3 April – 27 October, 11am-5pm. Henry Moore Studios & Gardens, Dane Tree House, Perry Green, Hertfordshire SG10 6EE. Tel 01279 843333, henry-moore.org

❸ **RHS Spring Launch and Orchid Show**
Don't miss first RHS show of the year, incorporating the RHS Orchid Show. Find plants and gardening sundries for sale and preview what's ahead for RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019. 8 April, 5-9pm. £10. 9-10 April, 10am-5pm. From £5. RHS Lawrence Hall, Westminster, London SW1P 2QD. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

❹ **Garden tour of Pensthorpe Natural Park**
Head gardener Jonathan Pearce will lead a walk around Pensthorpe's gardens to showcase the park's spring displays. 12 April, 3-5pm. £11.95 with tea and cake. Pensthorpe Natural Park, Pensthorpe, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN. Tel 01328 863628, pensthorpe.com

❺ **Exotica**
Discover the diversity of exotic species in this exhibition of 30 paintings of unusual tropical plants, from *Adenia hastata,* a relative of the passionflower (pictured right, by Vicki Thomas), to *Encephalartos woodii*, the oldest plant in the Temperate House at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. 13 April – 27 October, 10am-6pm. Admission included with entry to Kew. Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

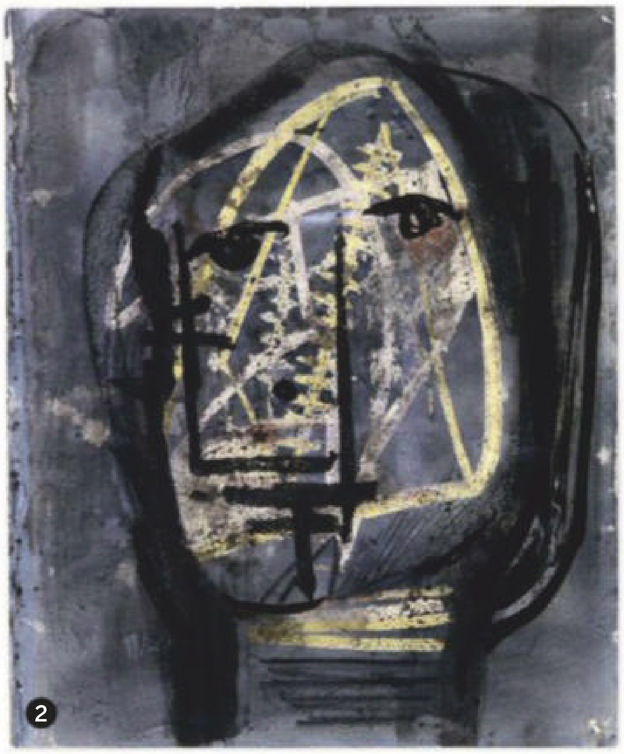
❻ **Tulip Celebration at Hever Castle**
Enjoy glorious displays of spring bulbs chosen by award-winning bulb specialist Johnny Walkers, on one of the free daily tours of the garden, as well as floral arrangements inside the castle. The gates to Park Wood will also be open this month to make the most of the bluebell display. 24-30 April, 10.30am-5pm, from £16.75. Hever Castle & Gardens, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG. Tel 01732 865224, hevercastle.co.uk

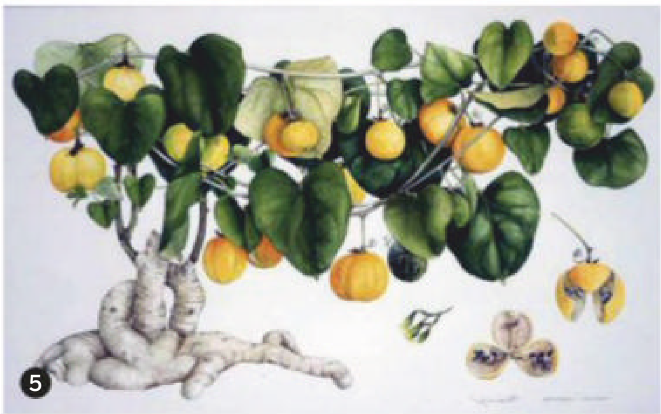
❼ **Shrubs for Seasonality: Talk and Tour with Jim Gardiner**
Learn how to identify and use shrubs effectively in the garden in this illustrated talk by horticulturist Jim Gardiner. The talk is followed by a tour of the gardens at Borde Hill. 25 April, 10.30am-1.30pm. £28. Borde Hill Garden, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1XP. Tel 01444 450326, bordehill.co.uk

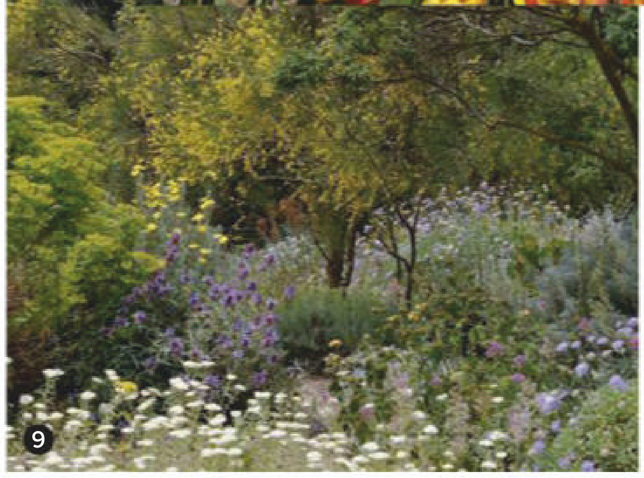
❽ **Garden Design Taster Day**
Get a taste for what it would be like to study at Inchbald School of Design, on a garden design day led by faculty director Andrew Duff and senior tutor Marcus Green that will give visitors an insight into a career in garden design. 25 April and 25 July. Inchbald School of Design, 7 Eaton Gate, London SW1W 9BA. Tel 020 7730 5508, inchbald.co.uk

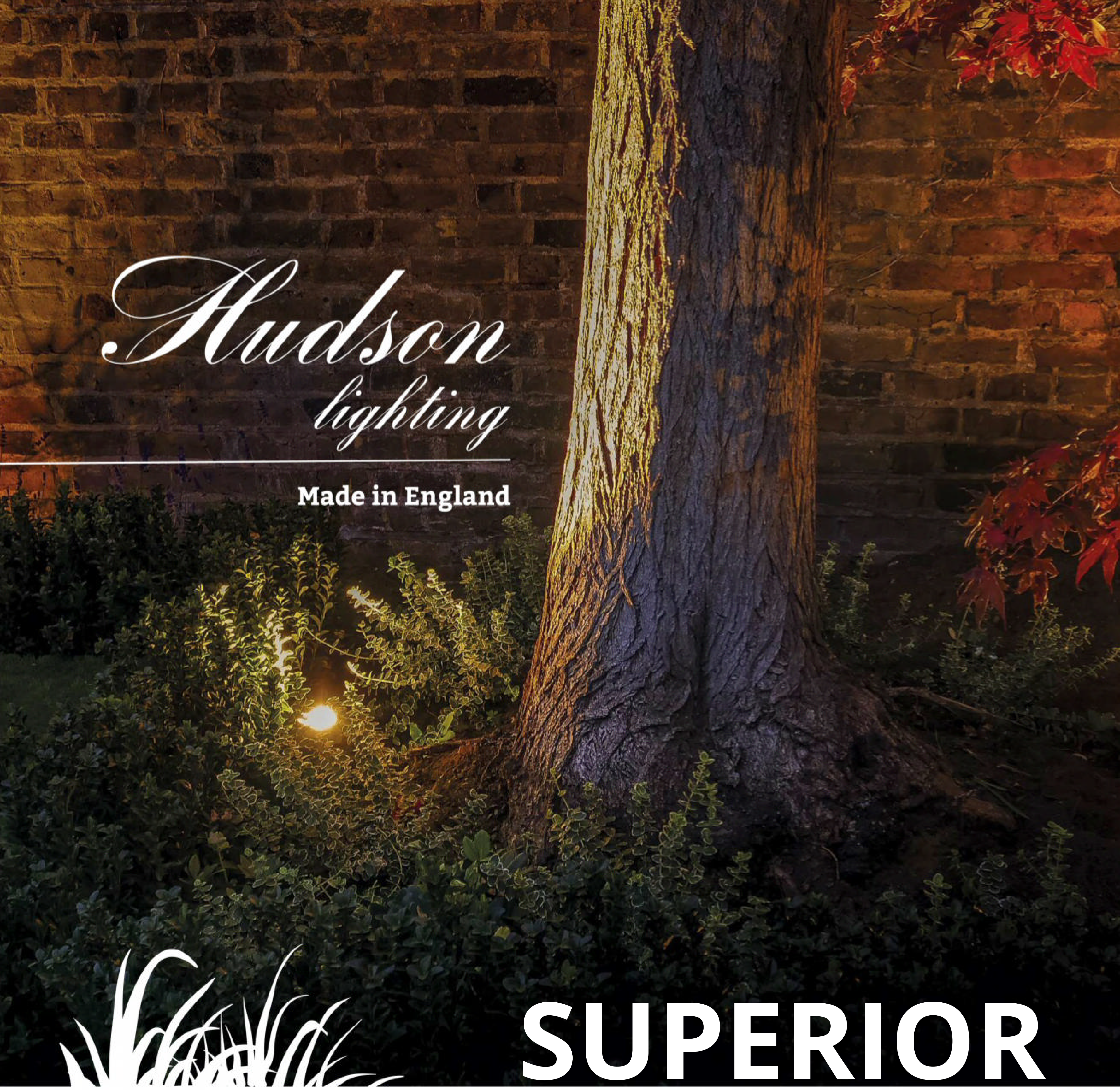
❾ **SGD Spring Conference 2019**
With an emphasis on strategies in plantsmanship and plant species selection for changing climate and biodiversity, Sex in the Garden is the theme for the 2019 SGD Spring conference. Speakers include Olivier Filippi, Noel Kingsbury, and fragrance-research scientist Emma Desmier. 27 April. Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. Tel 0115 9683 188, sgd.org.uk

❿ **Woburn Abbey Garden Show**
Book now for the 10th Woburn Abbey Garden Show. Show highlights include talks from Adam Frost and Pippa Greenwood, plus gardening and cooking demonstrations. 22 June, 10am-6pm (last entry 5pm). 23 June, 10am-5pm (last entry 4pm). £16.25. Enjoy an exclusive reader discount of 20 per cent on tickets using code GI2019. Woburn Abbey and Gardens, Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA. Tel 01525 290333, woburnabbey.co.uk









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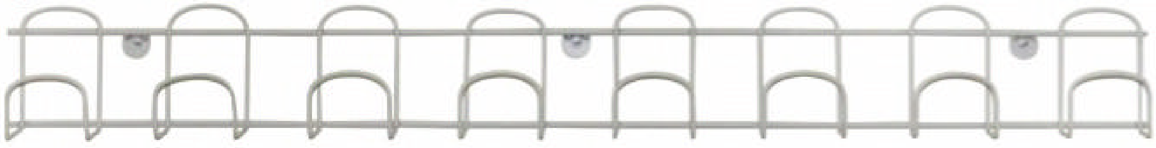

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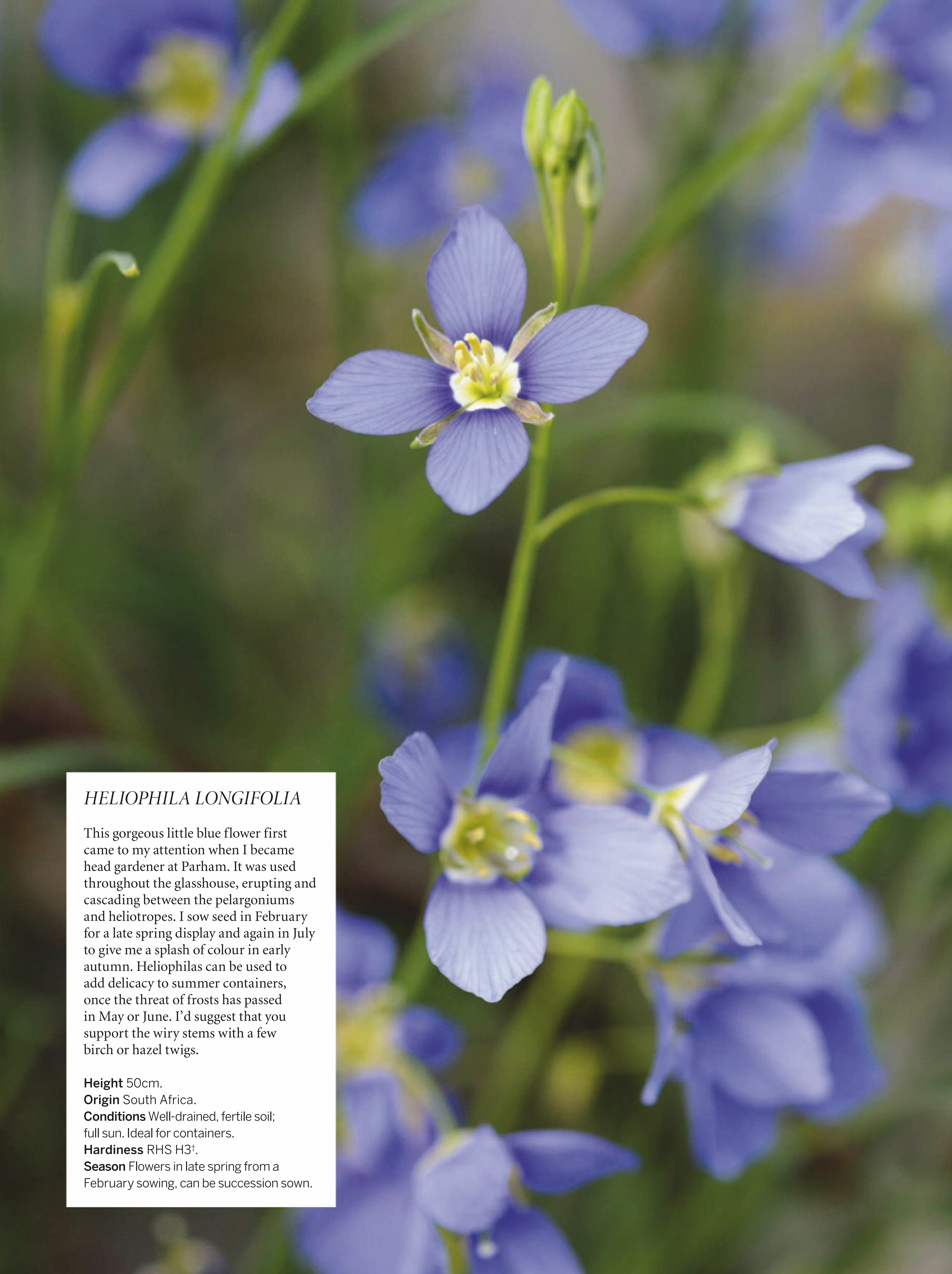


HELIOPHILA LONGIFOLIA

This gorgeous little blue flower first came to my attention when I became head gardener at Parham. It was used throughout the glasshouse, erupting and cascading between the pelargoniums and heliotropes. I sow seed in February for a late spring display and again in July to give me a splash of colour in early autumn. Heliophilas can be used to add delicacy to summer containers, once the threat of frosts has passed in May or June. I'd suggest that you support the wiry stems with a few birch or hazel twigs.

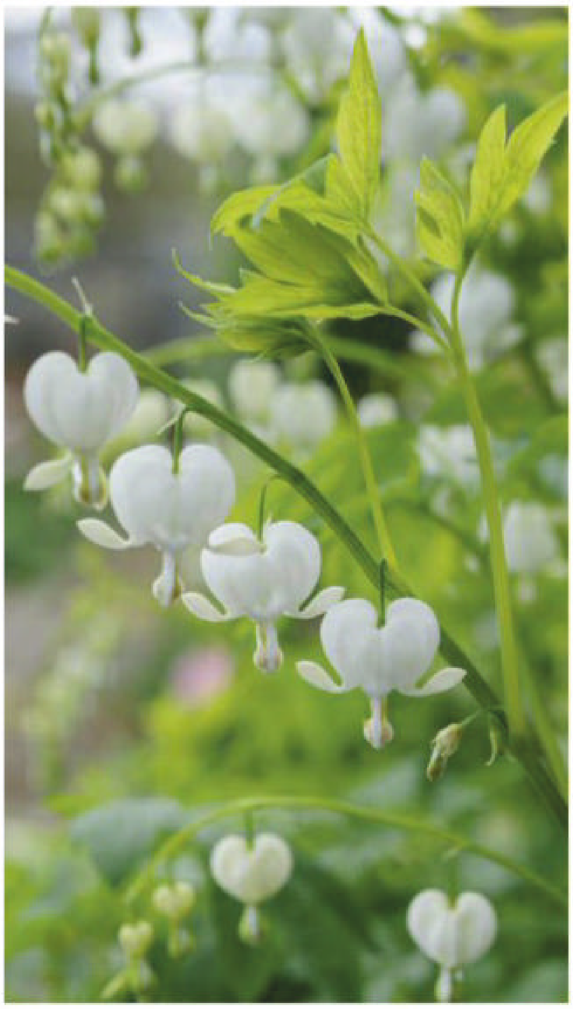
Height 50cm.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun. Ideal for containers.
Hardiness RHS H3†.
Season Flowers in late spring from a February sowing, can be succession sown.

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at Parham House
parhaminsussex.co.uk

APRIL PLANTS

With spring in full swing, Tom takes pleasure in a delicate *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* to light up shade and an unusual carmine pelargonium

WORDS **TOM BROWN** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



LAMPROCAPNOS SPECTABILIS 'ALBA'

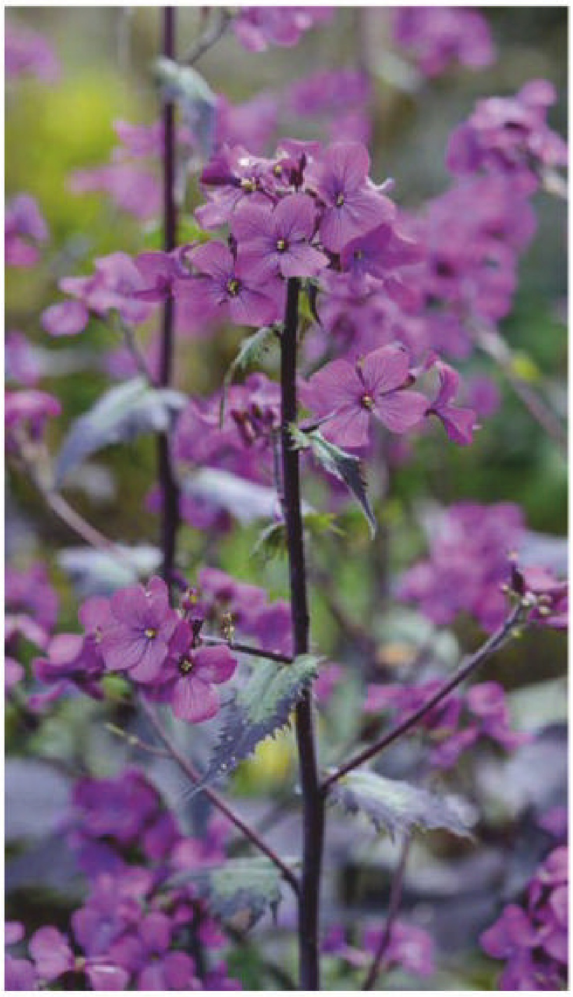
Bleeding hearts are enjoying something of a resurgence, with dark red forms and those with golden foliage adding to our planting palette. One of my favourites is this ever elegant, white cultivar – perfect for lighting up areas of shade and north-facing aspects at this time of year. This plant brings particular pleasure for me as it symbolises the start of a greater diversity in our gardens and heralds the transition from spring bulbs into the early summer. AGM*.

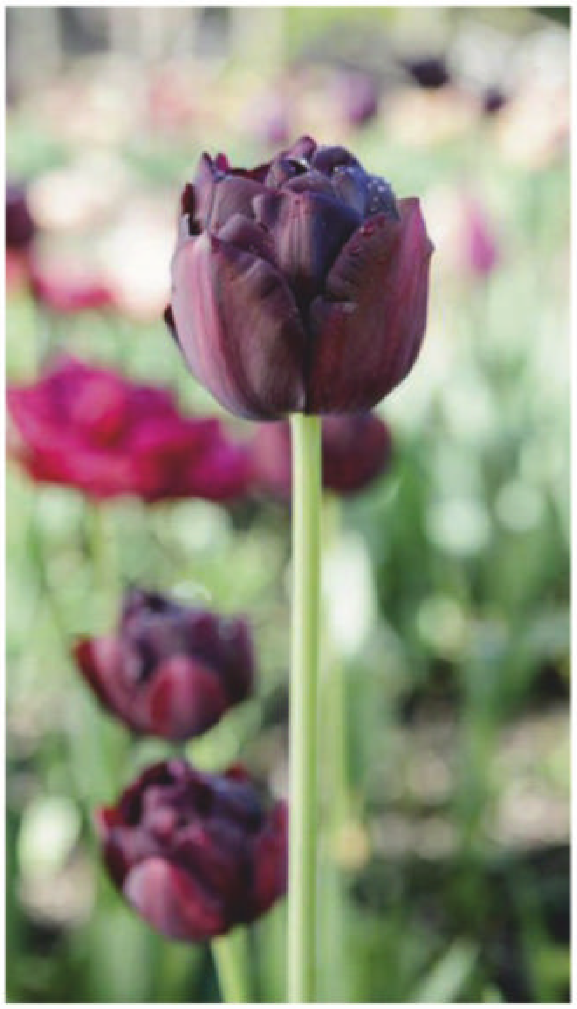
Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin (species Siberia, northern China, Korea and Japan).
Conditions Well-drained, fertile, soils that don't dry out; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.
Season Flowering late spring to early summer.

LUNARIA ANNUA 'CHEDGLOW'

I have always grown honesty and enjoy the way it self-seeds around the garden. Not only does it harmonise beautifully with bulbs but the translucent seedheads give a wonderful texture in the summer too – particularly if dried and arranged in the house. This cultivar, however, ramps up the excitement levels by doing all of the above while boasting decadent, dark-purple foliage as well. If you want to make the most of this plant, then try planting alongside it with bright-yellow tulips and forget-me-nots.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Garden origin (species central and southern Europe).
Conditions Moist, well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Late spring.





TULIPA 'BLACK HERO'

At a time of year when gardens are awash with tulips, we gardeners are always searching for that special something that stands out from the crowd. With its artichoke-like, almost-black, flowers, 'Black Hero' really hits the spot and is a somewhat more sophisticated selection than the popular 'Queen of the Night'. I've found it works best with paler or more vivid companions, such as the orange, Lily-flowered tulip 'Ballerina' and the pale-pink 'Angélique' tulip, to emphasise its sultry richness. A tall, upright form that flowers a little later than most.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Well-drained, reasonable garden soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.
Season April – May.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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PELARGONIUM ‘SPLENDIDE’

A low-growing pelargonium, with dark-carmine, pink and white flowers that are borne in clusters above compact, grey-green, serrated foliage. I keep it at around 5°C in the winter, with just enough water to keep it ticking over, but no more. Once growth increases with the warmer temperatures, up the water and give a potash feed once every ten days. These plants benefit from a little pampering, so remove tired foliage and spent flowers throughout summer. AGM.

Height 30cm.
Origin Hybrid between *P. tricolor* and *P. ovale*.
Conditions Well-drained, loam-based compost; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H1C.
Season Flowers spring to autumn if protected from frost, deadheaded and fed.

CAMASSIA ‘BLUE HEAVEN’

Camassias have always enriched our gardens, and can be a source of great elation as the tulips start to fade. Hoping to capitalise on this, I’ve started to grow ‘Blue Heaven’. It’s a cultivar that is more compact than others and showcases a pale-blue flower spike that can work equally well when grown in borders or in long grass. One of the reasons you often see camassias naturalised in grass is that their foliage becomes rather unsightly as it dies down and grasses, especially as they grow longer in May and June, can help to disguise this.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Western North America.
Conditions Moist, well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.
Season April – May.

EXOCHORDA X *MACRANTHA* ‘THE BRIDE’

A bushy shrub that has a wonderfully lax habit, making it ideal for cascading over a raised wall. Its cushion-like growth also makes it a strong contender at the front of a border. I use it in combination with *Clematis alpina*, as the two tussle with each other and erupt in a riot of flowers. A tough and hardy plant but avoid excessively dry conditions, particularly in the summer when flower buds are forming. Lightly prune after flowering. AGM.

Height 1.5-2.5m.
Origin Garden hybrid between *E. racemosa* and *E. korolkowii.*
Conditions Ideally moist but well-drained soil, tolerant of chalk and clay; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
Season April – May.

PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best.

Arundel Castle in West Sussex has been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk for more than 400 years. In April and May its gardens are full of exceptionally abundant tulip displays. Swathes of bulbs are planted in their thousands to naturalise in grass, in borders and in large opulent containers. The gardens include a stumpery, herbaceous borders, rose garden, glasshouses and the Collector Earl’s Garden, designed by Isabel and Julian Bannerman. Arundel Castle, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9AB. Tel 01903 88217, arundelcastle.org

Cragside in the heart of Northumberland has truly unique gardens with stunning views. The estate has more than 30 miles of footpaths and lakeside walks, and is home to one of Europe’s largest rock gardens, which slopes down the valley to the Debdon Burn. Once home to the Victorian inventor and industrialist Lord Armstrong, the garden is also famed for its collections of azaleas and rhododendrons – which are stunning in late spring – and the bedding displays and sculptures in the Italian terrace. While enjoying the garden, be sure to keep your eyes peeled for red squirrels. Cragside, Rothbury, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 7PX. Tel 01669 620333, nationaltrust.org.uk

Exbury Gardens in Hampshire are arguably among the finest woodland gardens in the country. The gardens were created 100 years ago for owner

▷

ANTHRISCUS SYLVESTRIS 'RAVENSWING'

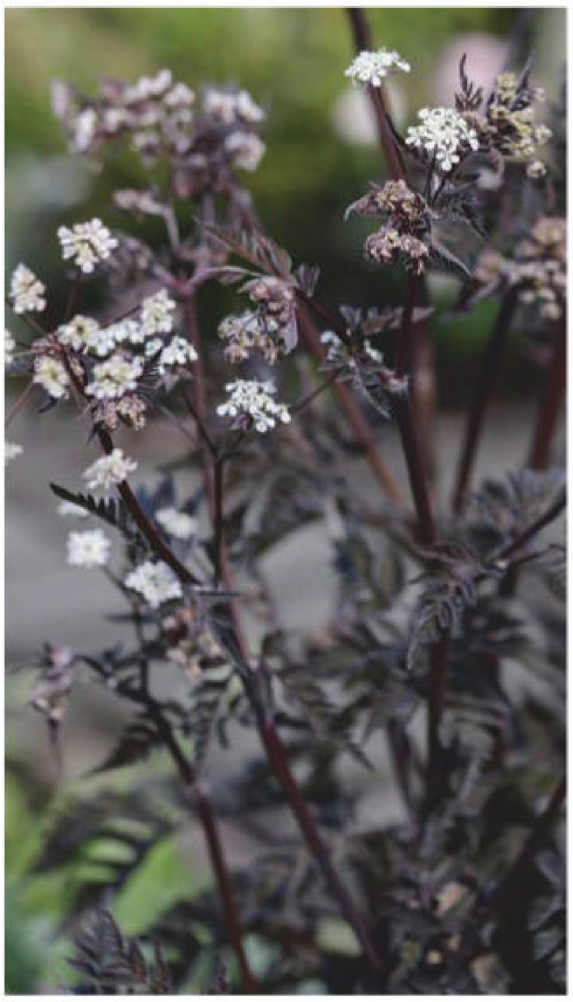
A cultivar that offers the same effortless grace as our native cow parsley, and brings a strong sense of place to garden plantings. The dark-maroon foliage and stems are a great contrast to tulips, alliums, honesty and early performing perennials. Thin the flowering stems to enhance its transparency, particularly at the front of a border, and use the thinnings as cut flowers. If permitted, it will self-seed around your garden but be mindful to remove any seedlings that lack the dark foliage from the offset.

Height 60cm-1.5m.
Origin Europe.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun for best foliage colour.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Flowering late spring to early summer.

MAGNOLIA 'YELLOW FEVER'

Recent breeding has produced some marvellous yellow-flowering magnolias. This beautiful, small tree, with a neat, upright habit, has large yellow buds that open and fade to cream with a delicious scent. Will tolerate most garden situations but needs some summer moisture and protection from strong winds to achieve the best performance. To enhance the subtle yellow flowers, I underplant with *Narcissus* 'Yellow Cheerfulness' that flowers in the same colour tones at the same time.

Height 4-8m.
Origin Garden hybrid between *M. acuminata* and *M. denudata*.
Conditions Organically rich, neutral to acidic, well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.
Season April – May.



PELARGONIUM 'ARDENS'

This little beauty is guaranteed to stop you in your tracks with its rich red flowers, floating on long airy stems. It's a stunning hybrid cross between *P. lobatum* and *P. fulgidum*, and prefers to be kept on the dry side during the winter. Thereafter, as we move into the warmer temperatures in spring, you should gently increase watering as the plant begins to grow. Be cautious with feeding as you want to avoid excessive foliar growth which can then compromise flowering. AGM.

Height Up to 50cm.
Origin Hybrid between *P. lobatum* and *P. fulgidum*.
Conditions Well-drained, loam-based compost; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H1C.
Season Flowers sporadically from spring to autumn.

▷ Lionel de Rothschild, a keen collector of plants, in particular azaleas and rhododendrons. In spring you'll find carpets of primroses, anemones and violets beneath a canopy of large-leaved rhododendrons, doing well thanks to the shelter of mature, native oaks and glades alongside the Beaulieu River.

Philippa and Bryan Burrough have lovingly developed their garden, **Ulting Wick**, in the heart of rural Essex, for the past 15 years. Vibrant plantings of tulips in box-edged beds are a real treat, filled with Philippa's inventive and artistic combinations. Over the past few years Ulting Wick's reputation for its tulip displays has grown, as has its exotic plantings in late summer. Away from the farmhouse, the gardens extend into the countryside with a more naturalistic style, with a large pond and herbaceous plantings, coupled with a greenhouse and vegetable garden. Open 28 April, 11am-5pm. Ulting Wick, Crouchman's Farm Road, Ulting, Maldon, Essex CM9 6QX. Tel 01245 380216, ultingwickgarden.co.uk

Topiary enthusiasts need look no further than **Levens Hall** in Cumbria, which is something of a centre of pilgrimage for those who appreciate this art form. For more than 300 years, gardeners have created and tended numerous theatrical shapes, defying trends and fashions in a horticultural love affair. Surrounding the 17th-century house, accessed through an unassuming gate, are six acres of grounds full of ancient topiary specimens, standing strong against the Cumbrian climate. In addition to the topiary, a particular highlight in April is the carpets of seasonal bedding that are surrounded by the topiary hedges and punctuated by quirky yew giants. Look out for giant cats and elephants. Levens Hall, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 0PD. Tel 01539 560321, levenshall.co.uk

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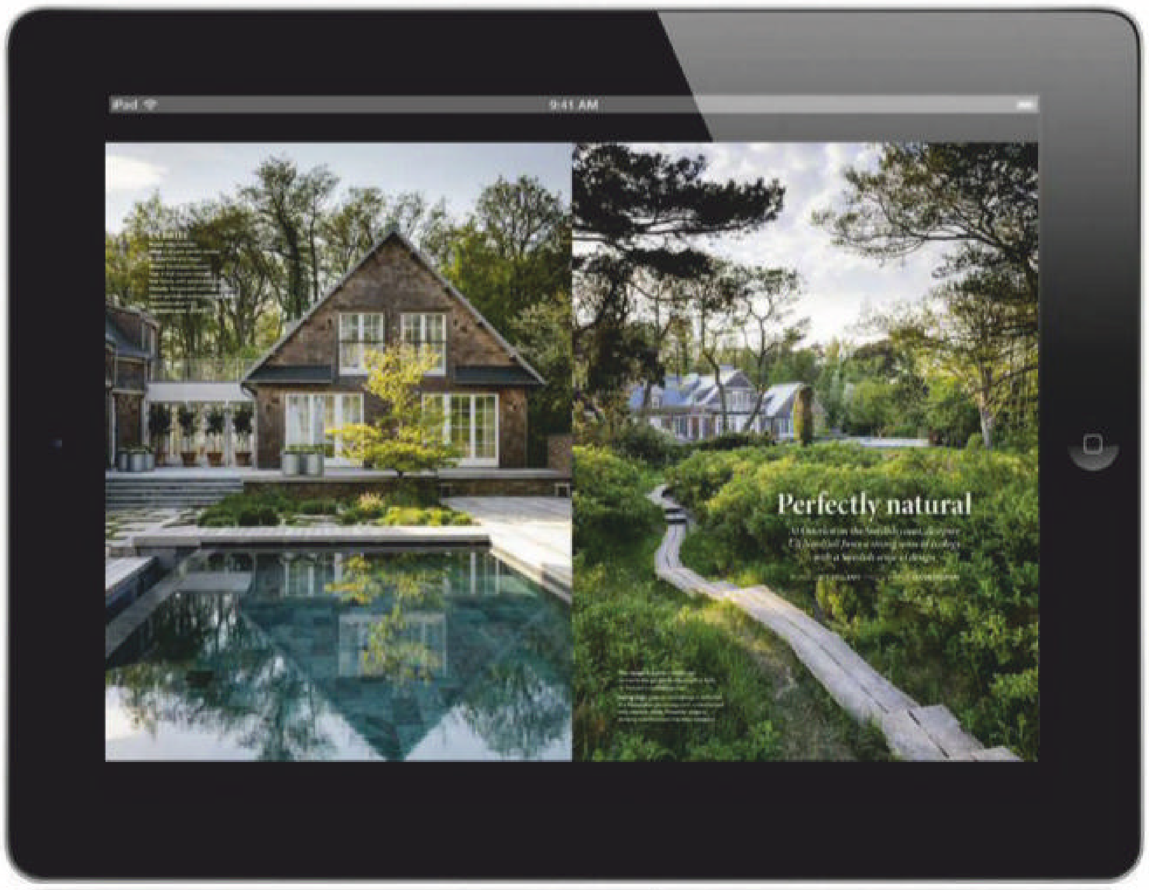
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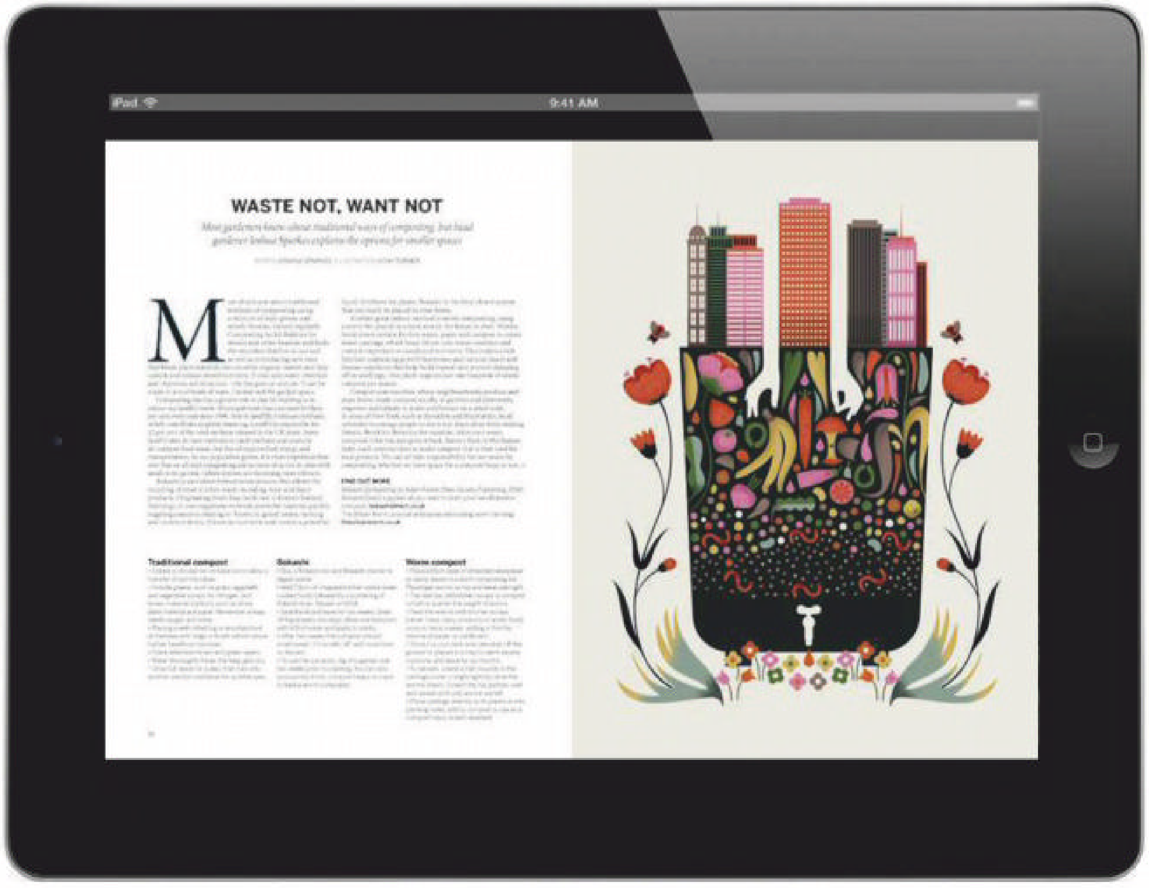
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The Outsider

Horticulturist Hannah Gardner hikes across the limestone and granite plateaux of the Causses and Cévennes in southern France on the trail of an elusive red-black pasqueflower

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

The Causses and Cévennes region of southern France was awarded UNESCO world heritage status in 2011 thanks to the tradition of agro-pastoralism that has shaped the countryside here for thousands of years. Causses is a southern French dialect word for the extensive elevated limestone plateaux that dominate the east of the region. The elevation here is around 1,000m on average. The gently undulating untamed landscape is dissected into named 'Causse' areas by the dramatic gorges of the rivers Tarn and Jonte. The porous ground and thin soils preclude intensive agriculture. Instead the pastoral tradition of open grazing creates a grassy steppe with few boundaries and many interesting flowers. The centre of this region is dominated by the high Cévennes National Park. Here the bedrock is granite and schist, the damper soil more acidic and the equally interesting flora quite distinct from that of the calcareous plateaux and gorges.

Inspiration for the trip

I recall plentiful wildflowers growing in the verges in the UK when I was young. Though native to this country, *Pulsatilla* are now rare in the wild here, but occur frequently in many parts of Europe. I am drawn to dark, sultry flowers so was intrigued to hear of a sombre, reddish-black species *Pulsatilla rubra* that grows in parts of Spain and central southern France. The challenge was to locate it.

When to go

Spring is the best time to visit to see pasqueflowers and orchids. Between April and late June is when the feather grass (*Stipa pennata*) steppes are especially beautiful, waves of silver rippling among scattered islands of shrubby juniper.

Where to go

In spring, when the mottled branches are still bare and the gnarly trunks of downy oak (*Quercus pubescens*) puncture a dense floral carpet of *Hepatica nobilis*, lungwort, stinking hellebores and yellow-flowered *Anemone ranunculoides* the open deciduous woods are glorious.

To spot any flora under these big skies you need to walk out across the grassy steppe. Small flowers aren't easy to see from afar, and there is much ground to cover, so you'll need to narrow your focus. After an enjoyable four days hiking, my search for the elusive dark-red *Pulsatilla* continued, crossing and recrossing the Causse Noir, Mejean and de Sauveterre. Eventually, while chatting to a village baker, I swiped to a saved image on my phone. A slow nod, and minutes later I saw it. Parked at the end of a bumpy woodland track I walked across the Causse away from Le Massegros through *Pinus sylvestris* and contorted wind-pruned junipers to open ground. At my feet were thousands of demure, dark pasqueflowers and the intensely blue grape-like flowers of *Muscari neglectum*. A vivid purple form of *Viola odorata* tumbled in between. More compact in habit than *P. vulgaris*, it has fewer hairs on the underside of the (less pointed) petals. The beautiful, dark red-purple flowers are quite different and the entire plant generally less hirsute.

In the upper reaches of the Gorges du Tarn, sheer limestone cliffs overhang the road as you approach Le Cirque des Baumes, where a steep, wonderfully flowery 4km hiking trail zig-zags up through the south-facing cliffs to arrive on the plateau of Causse de Sauveterre. Tufts of *Pulsatilla vulgaris* and the early bee orchids, *Ophrys sphegodes* (early spider orchid) and its subspecies *passionis* (Passiontide orchid) are easy to spot among the rocks. Navigating the Causse du Larzac, I found *Narcissus* in the pine woods, and vast grass steppes leading to La Couvertoirade, one of five beautifully restored, walled Templar towns of the Causse. Lush unimproved meadows nearby were awash with colour – sunny drifts of oxlips, cowslips, early purple orchids (*Orchis mascula*) and, on rockier ground, the less familiar cardabelle, the acanthus-leaved *Carlina acanthifolia*. This ground-hugging thistle can reach 50cm in diameter, flowering in high summer. A rare and vulnerable species, it is emblematic of this region and still occasionally dried and pinned to front doors. Historically, a much-used starchy, medicinal plant it was commonly believed to ward off evil spirits.

Plant to grow at home

The spring-flowering pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* is a very hardy, easy-to-grow perennial. Wild populations favour dry grassland and stony, often chalky soils. Once a favourite of rock gardens, it requires perfectly drained, fertile soil and as such does very well dotted through a gravel garden where it will readily self-seed. The closed buds and foliage emerge together, coated in fine silky hairs that catch the light and shimmer as the plant crowns and then elongates during flowering. In cultivation it can easily reach a graceful 30cm. Fortunately, its season of interest extends well beyond spring. As the cool, velvety flowers fade, wonderful airy seedheads develop. These can be stored and used as valuable texture alongside fresh flowers in an arrangement. Several colour forms are in cultivation, including *P. vulgaris* 'Alba' (white) and the more usual rich papal purple *P. vulgaris*. Both are wonderful, worthwhile additions to any garden.

Guides and maps

Cévennes and Grands Causses, France by Dirk Hilbers (Crossbill Guides, 2015) describes the flora, fauna and natural history of the region, and includes detailed routes for exploring on foot and by car. *Fleurs sauvages en Aveyron* (Editions Debaisieux, 2000) is an excellent plant guide in French. Species are grouped by habitat and flower colour.

Where to stay

Château du Cros
Place de Chateau, Le Cros 34520, France.
Tel +33 (0)4 6796 3926, lechateauducros.fr
Atmospheric, well-renovated château in the southwest of the Cévennes National Park.

Le Clos des Chênes
Lous Pouzes 48500, Massegros Causses Gorges, France.
Tel +33 (0)4 6645 5188, cdc-lozere.com
Stylish self-catering chalets in an oak woodland on the Causse de Sauveterre.

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GARDENING TALENT

Claire Greenslade

Claire is head gardener at Hestercombe Gardens in Somerset, where the discovery of the remains of an Elizabethan water garden is offering the opportunity for some exciting exploratory gardening

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden/gardening memory My mum worked on a fruit farm in Kent when I was small so my summers were spent running around the farm with all the other children and scoffing as much fruit as possible. I can also remember making patterns on the path in our front garden with some curvy marigold seeds.

Was gardening your first choice of career? I have a degree in fashion and textiles and worked as a self-employed fabric designer, screen printing samples for the fashion industry. The industry was moving towards CAD and I knew I didn't want a job at a computer. Then I was distracted by an advert for an organic gardening course and after about two weeks on the course I was hooked on horticulture. I'd found my 'thing'. It has everything for me – nurturing, community, food, pattern, craft, colour – all wrapped up in a practical job.

Horticultural heroes I love Ron Finley the Gangsta Gardener – you have to listen to his TED talk. I love colour so I am a big fan of Christopher Lloyd, Gertrude Jekyll and organic florist JW Blooms.

Worthwhile tips for every gardener It's not an exact science (although I am sure that most scientists wouldn't agree). Don't be afraid to have a go, it might work.

Most valuable training I did the three-year Careership programme with the National Trust and spent three years based at Barrington Court with a team of gardeners who'd been there for 30-plus years. Every day was wrapped in history and stories and vast local knowledge.

Favourite planting style I love woodland gardens in spring. I like a garden to be slightly wild and untamed in its planting. And I like gardens that have evolved rather than been planned to the last detail.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Limited plant choice. It seems weird to me that we live in a global society and yet we are losing our choice of plants. Small-scale, skilled nurserymen are hard to find and plants are being lost if they're not commercially viable.

Guiding principles I spent a year working at Garden Organic, which has hugely influenced how I work. I am also a big believer in bringing people together through horticulture. Last year I set up a project called Grow for Syria and we raised £5,000 for Help Refugee UK through horticultural projects. It was so inspiring to see people come together to support a cause at such a grass-roots level.

Contact headgardener@hestercombe.com. Hestercombe runs a Meet the Gardener tour every Friday at 11am throughout June.

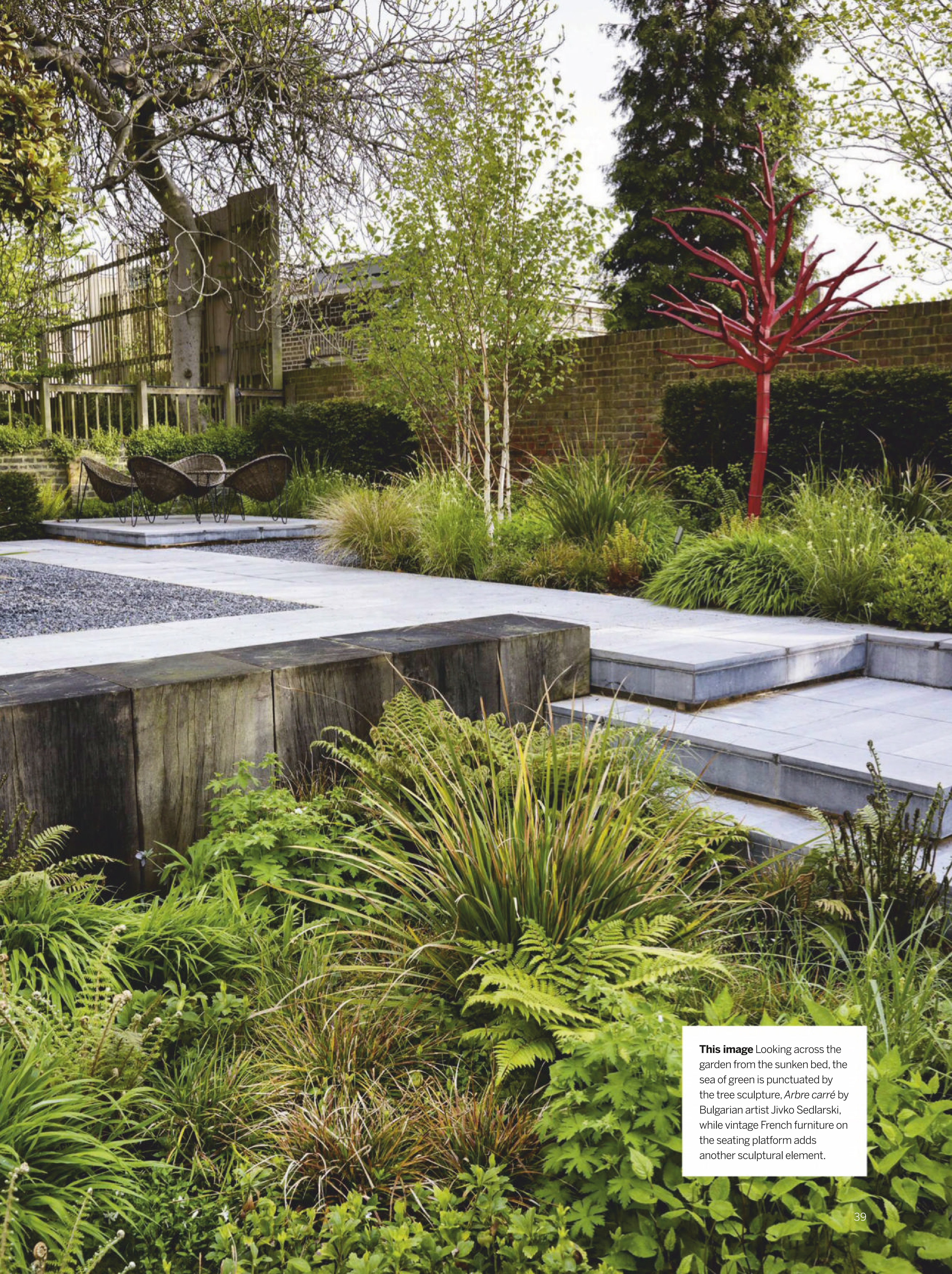
IN BRIEF

What Small, walled garden redesigned as a woodland-style garden on different levels.
Where Southwest London.
Size 221 square metres.
Soil Imported mixed loam.
Climate Temperate, with cool to warm summers and mild winters.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Pools of green

A cool colour palette and dense, textured planting create a woodland feel in this immersive London garden designed by Chris Moss

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



This image Looking across the garden from the sunken bed, the sea of green is punctuated by the tree sculpture, *Arbre carré* by Bulgarian artist Jivko Sedlarski, while vintage French furniture on the seating platform adds another sculptural element.

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When an established city garden is stripped out to allow for new underground rooms to be added to the house, there's the chance to make something very different. But for garden designer Chris Moss, who worked closely with architect Sally Mackereth of Studio Mackereth on the renovation of this apartment on the ground floor and basement of what was once a Victorian artist's studio in Chelsea, London, there were restrictions to consider before he could pick up a pencil. More than 70 per cent of the brick-walled plot has a maximum planting depth of 40cm that rather rules out large specimen trees. East facing, it is in the shade of the tall house from midday onwards; three of the existing trees had preservation orders and had to be retained; and there was a 3m-wide lightwell separating the house from the garden.

To retain a link to the apartment's artistic past, Chris devised a scheme strong in geometric lines and sculptural elements but with a richly textured, calm planting palette, predominantly in shades of green that suggests a woodland edge. Crisply laid Belgian blue limestone paving is used for the causeway that leads into the garden from the kitchen, for the seating area in the sunniest corner, and for the rest of the circulation through the garden, which is divided into a series of densely planted beds. Steps lead up from the causeway to a pathway that cuts a strong horizontal across the garden, dropping down via three steps to a sunken bed overlooked by the sitting room. "I wanted to keep the planting here low, to make it feel like it's flooded with green plants, as if you are looking down on a pool of water," explains Chris. Balustrades were required to create a safety barrier between the garden and the lightwell and here Chris has added an elegant solution in the form of fins of bronze-coated metal posts. "Glass balustrades would have been too harsh. The fins will also allow the ▷

1 *Luzula nivea* Clump-forming grass that flowers in spring and softens the planting. 40cm. RHS H5†.

2 *Dryopteris cycadina* A tall fern with black-stemmed fronds and evergreen form. Grows in full sun and partial shade. 90cm. AGM*. RHS H4.

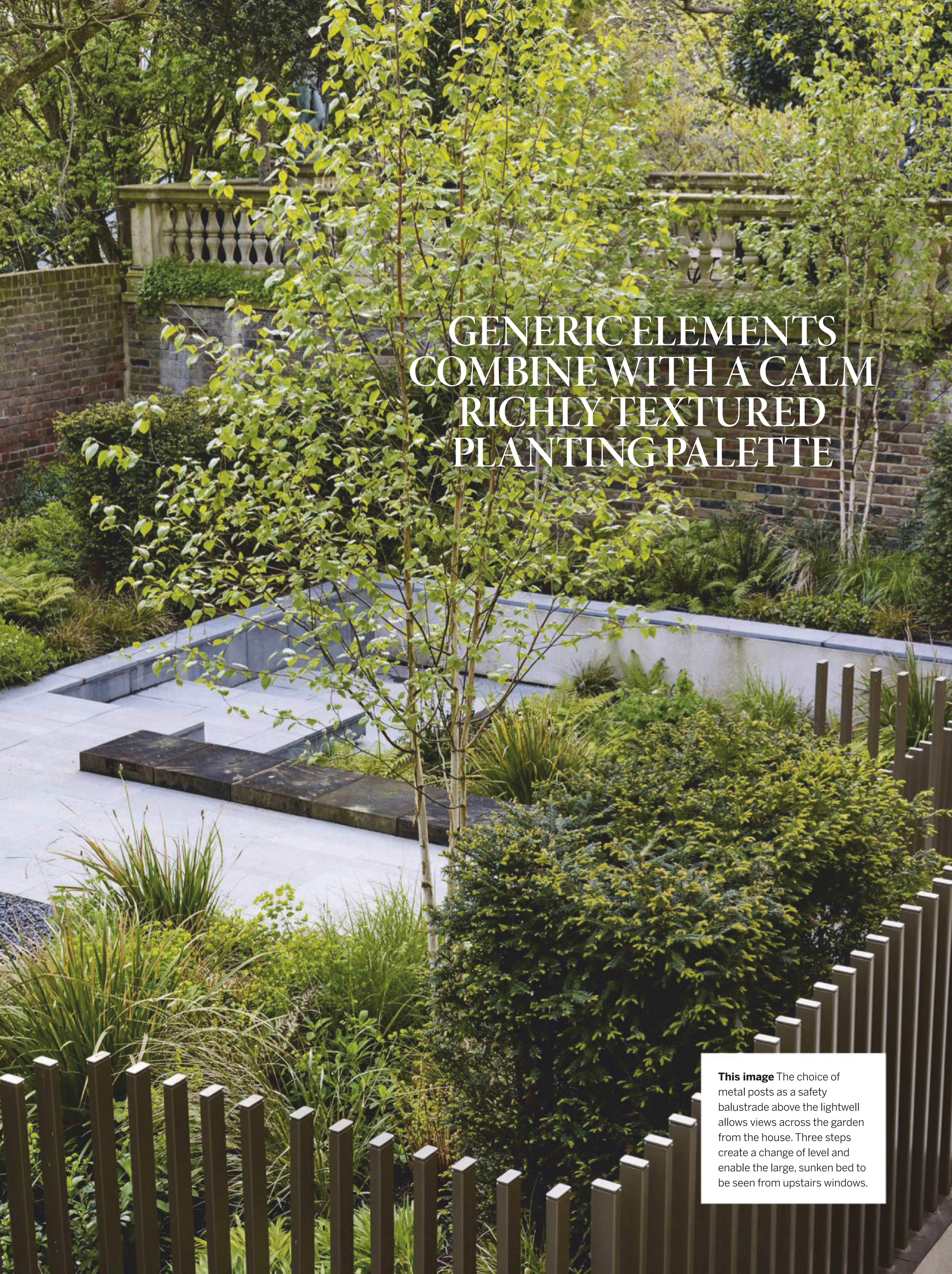
3 *Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album' Grown for its matt, downy leaves and white flowers. 50cm. AGM. RHS H7.

4 *Hakonechloa macra* Semi-evergreen grass with russet tones in autumn. Ideal for softening hard edges. Prefers semi-shade. 50cm. AGM. RHS H7.

5 *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* Spreading evergreen with lime-green flowers in spring. Ideal groundcover for dry shade. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6.

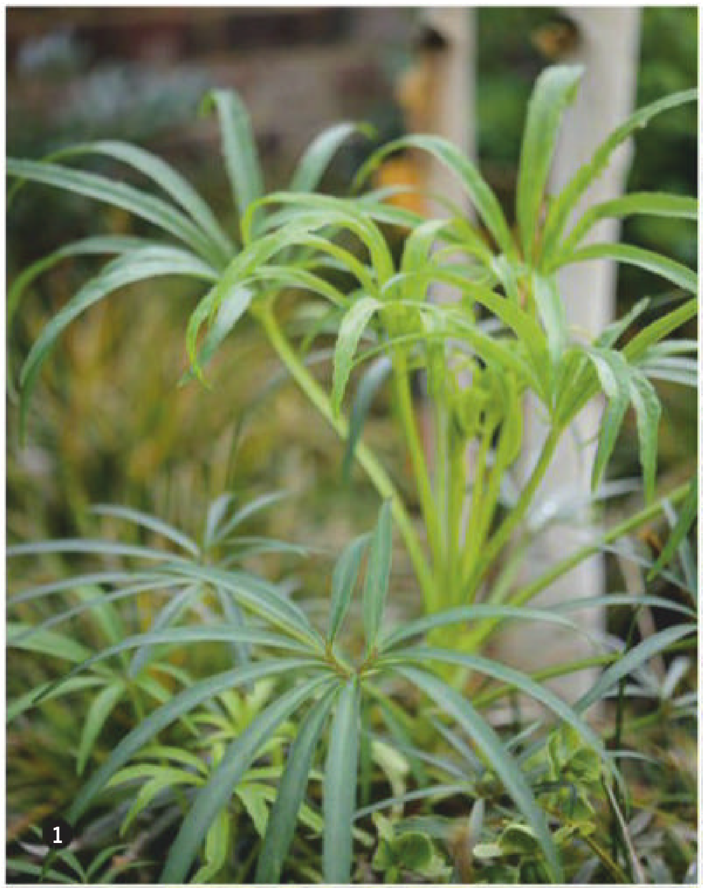
6 *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Betty Bowring' A great groundcover plant with a felty leaf and delicate white flowers in spring. Thrives in moist shade. 40cm. RHS H6.

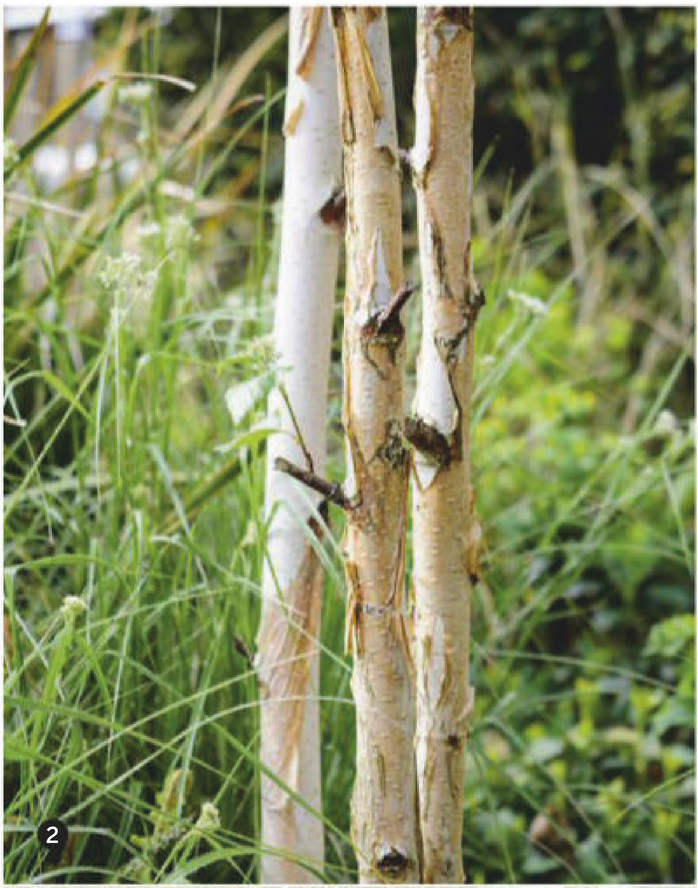
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

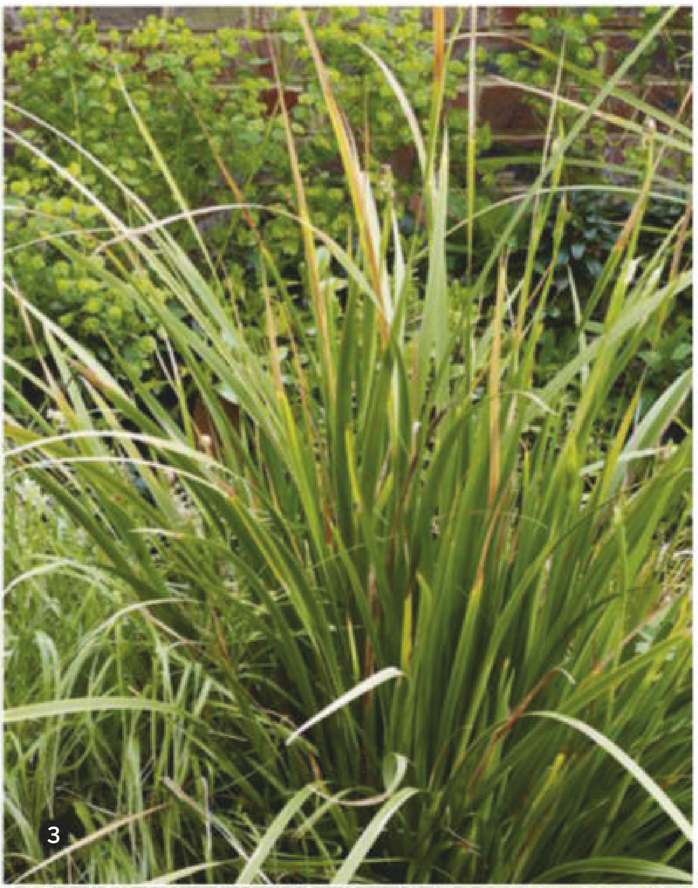


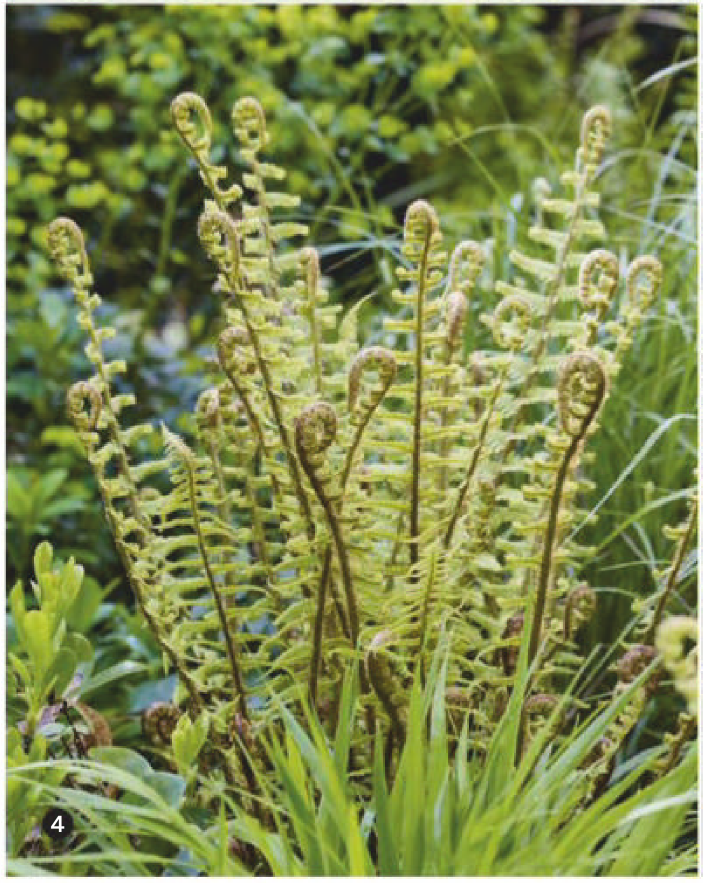
GENERIC ELEMENTS COMBINE WITH A CALM RICHLY TEXTURED PLANTING PALETTE

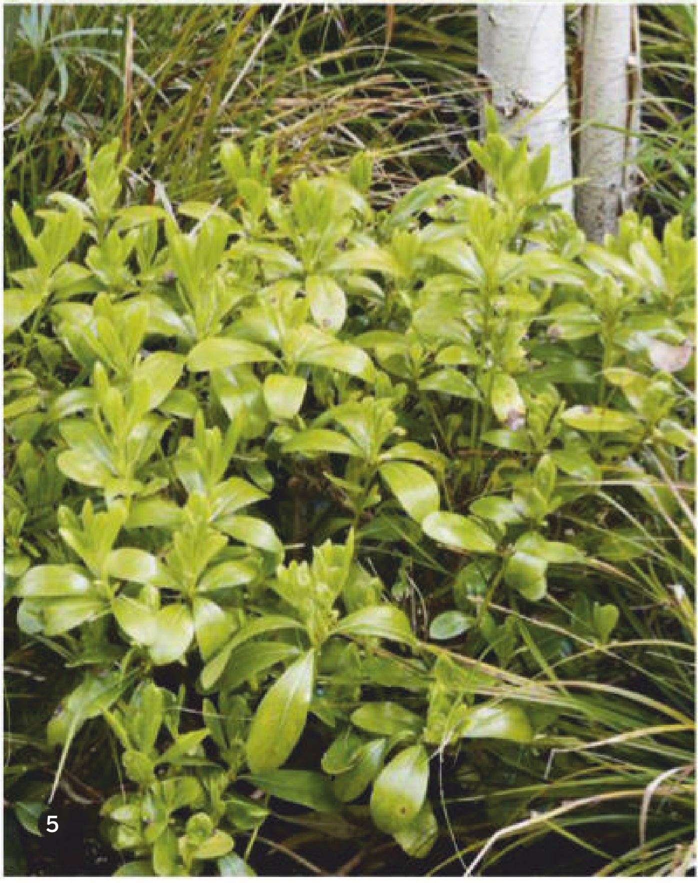
This image The choice of metal posts as a safety balustrade above the lightwell allows views across the garden from the house. Three steps create a change of level and enable the large, sunken bed to be seen from upstairs windows.

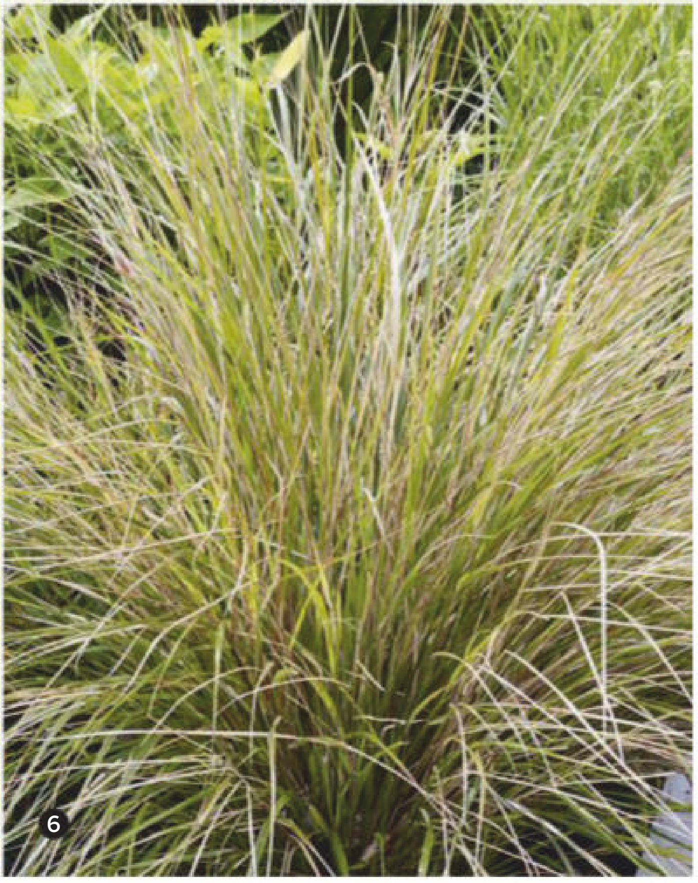












▷ planting to pop through the gaps." More texture is created by two lines of hefty oak cubes that form a cladding in front of two of the retaining plaster walls that are painted white elsewhere.

By restricting the planting palette to shades of green, with pinpoints of white from early spring until autumn, Chris's design celebrates the textural variety of his chosen plants. With the exception of the multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*, which are omitted from the sunken bed, Chris uses the same mixture of plants in all the beds but in different configurations, depending on location. Groundcover plants include *Pachysandra terminalis* and *Vinca minor* f. *alba* 'Gertrude Jekyll'. Drifts of perennials and grasses, including *Carex oshimensis* 'Evergreen', *Hakonechloa macra*, *Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album', *Luzula nivea* and *Dryopteris* and *Polystichum* ferns, create the next layer, with accent plants such as *Libertia chilensis* (in the sunniest beds) and *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'. Blocks of clipped yew provide a taller layer, creating a dark-green backdrop for the lighter greens and whites and an evergreen structure that holds the garden together in winter. Careful positioning of the striking red, metal tree sculpture by Jivko Sedlarski in front of one of the yew blocks ensures that it catches the eye in all seasons. The garden's other contemporary artwork, an airy wirework of a pair of jellyfish by Benedetta Mori Ubaldini, dangles in the lightwell and is best seen from the basement bedroom.

The garden has an automatic irrigation system to ensure that the evergreen elements do not dry out. Maintenance is light: yew blocks are clipped twice a year, flowering plants deadheaded and tired winter leaves cut off the ferns. Four years after planting, it has settled into a lush tapestry of greens. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Chris's work at **chrismossgardens.com**

1 ***Helleborus foetidus*** Ideal for shady areas. Its filigree new foliage is a bonus. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7.

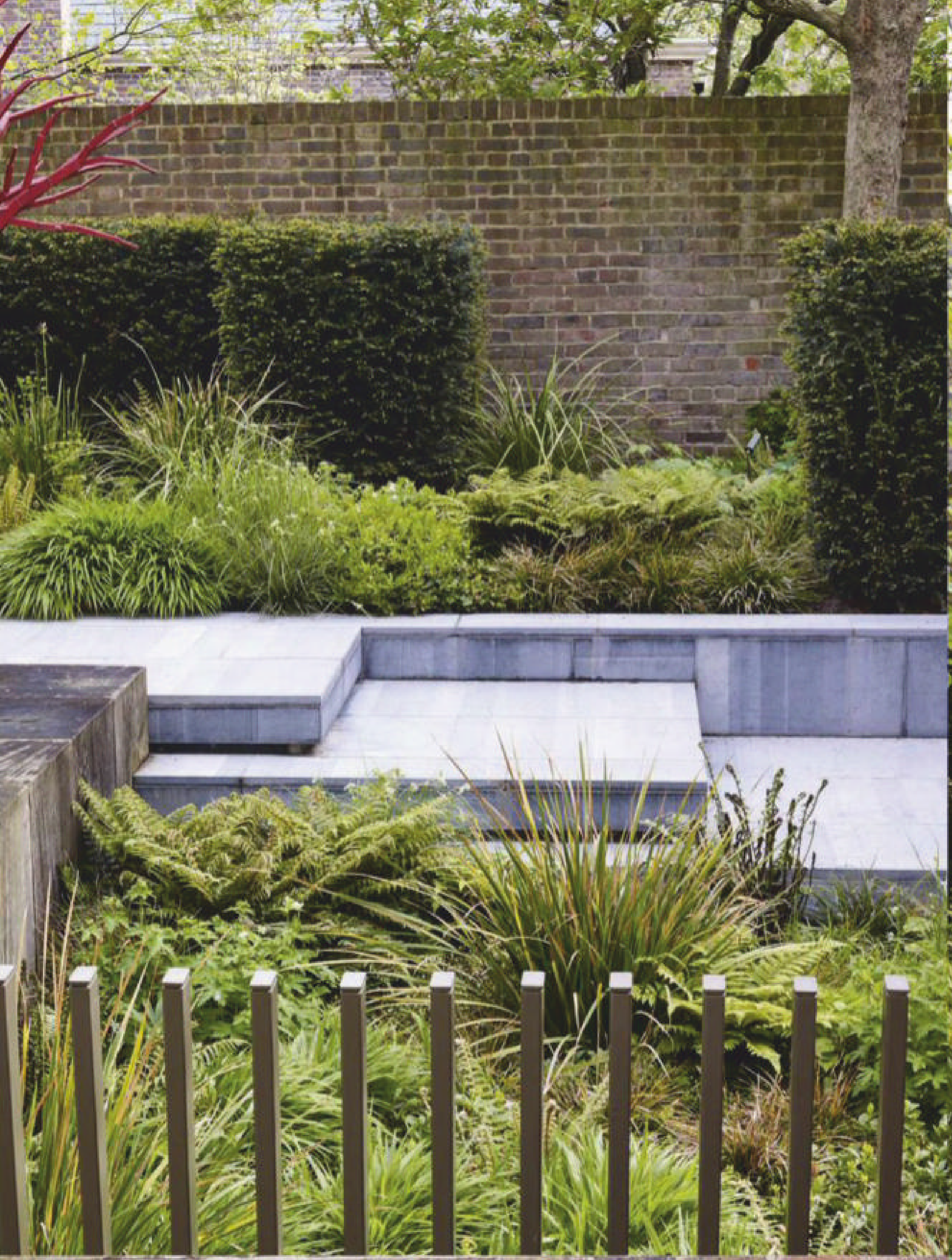
2 ***Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*** The multi-stemmed form of this white-barked Himalayan birch is ideal for small gardens. Turns golden yellow in autumn. 6m in 20 years. RHS H7.

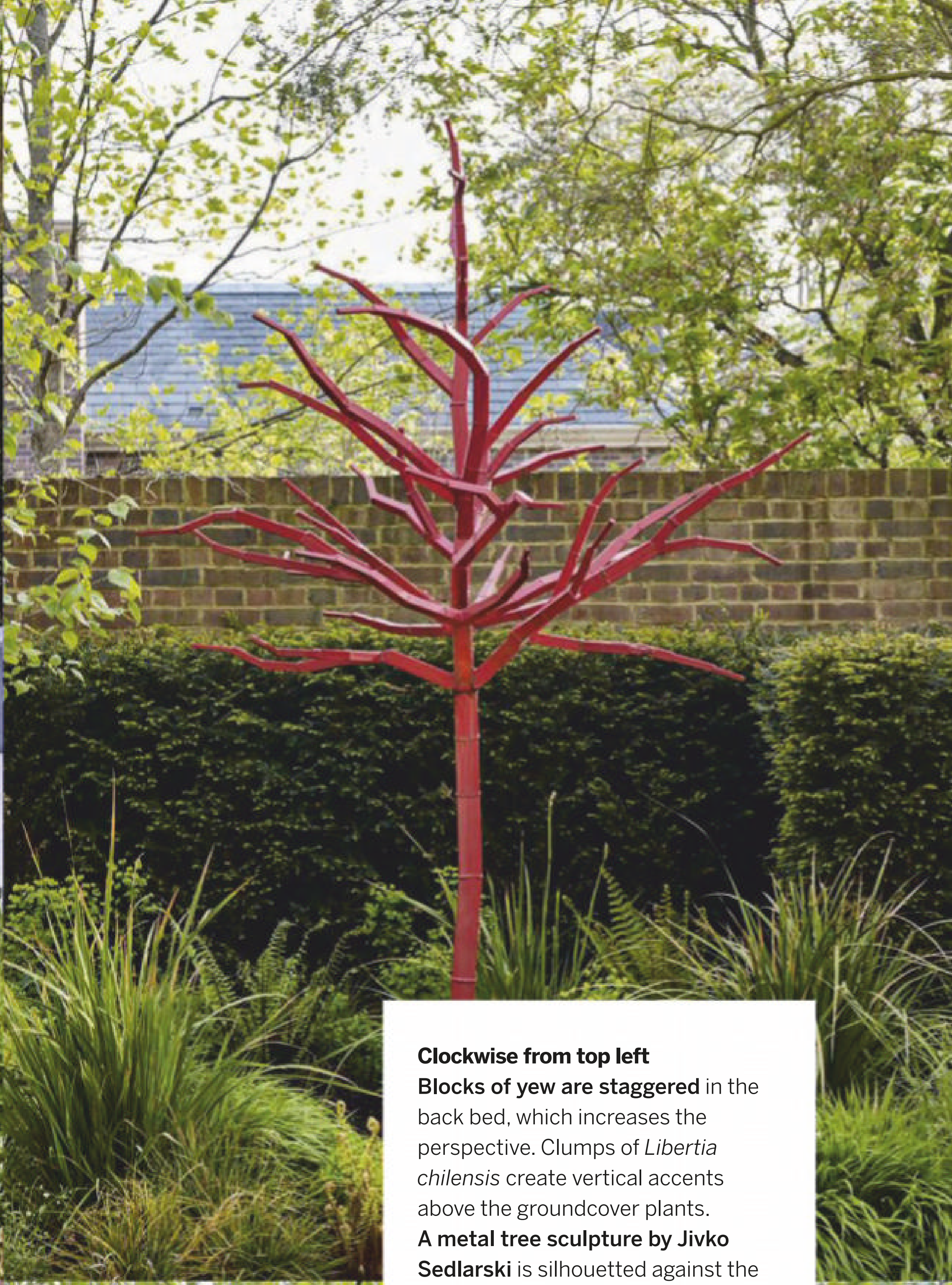
3 ***Libertia chilensis*** Clump-forming evergreen perennial with grass-like leaves and white daisy-like flowers in early summer. 90cm. AGM. RHS H3.

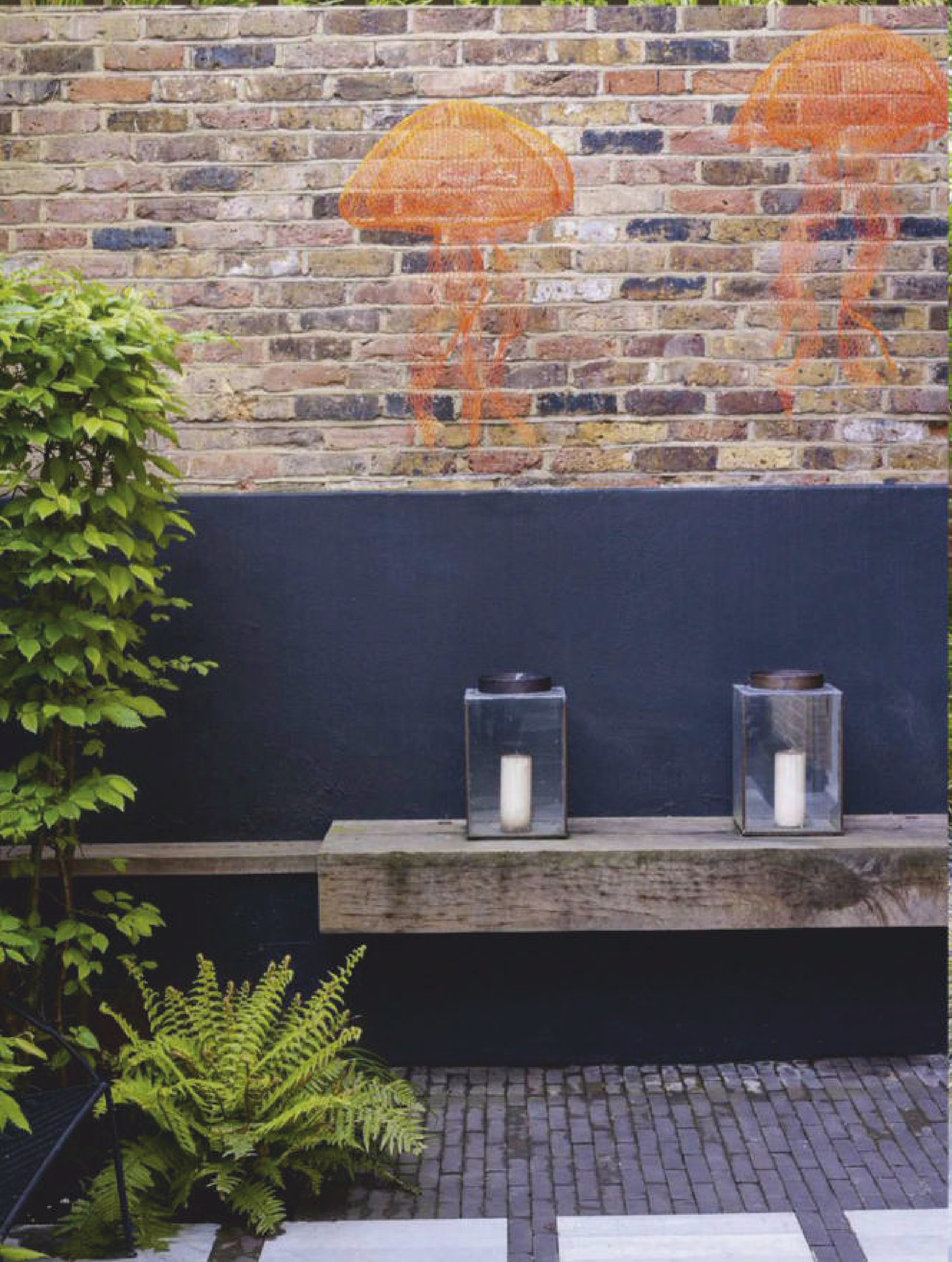
4 ***Dryopteris affinis*** Semi-evergreen fern with dramatic, yellow-green emerging fronds. 1m. AGM. RHS H5.

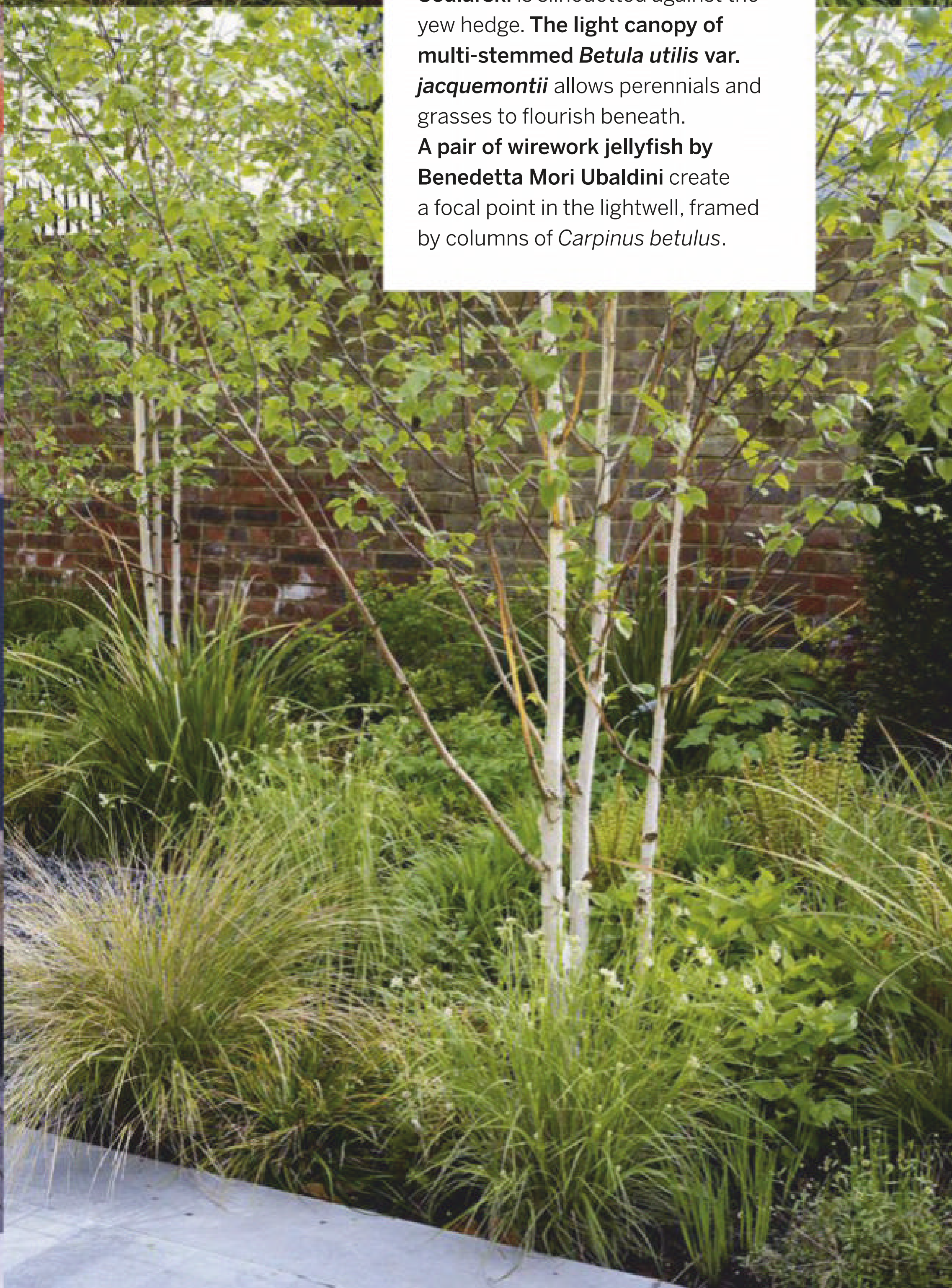
5 ***Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum'** Mound-forming dwarf shrub with glossy foliage. Honey-scented white flowers in early summer. 60cm.

6 ***Anemanthele lessoniana*** A useful grass for tricky spots, such as under trees. The fountain-like clumps of evergreen foliage turn orange-brown in late winter. 1m. AGM. RHS H4.

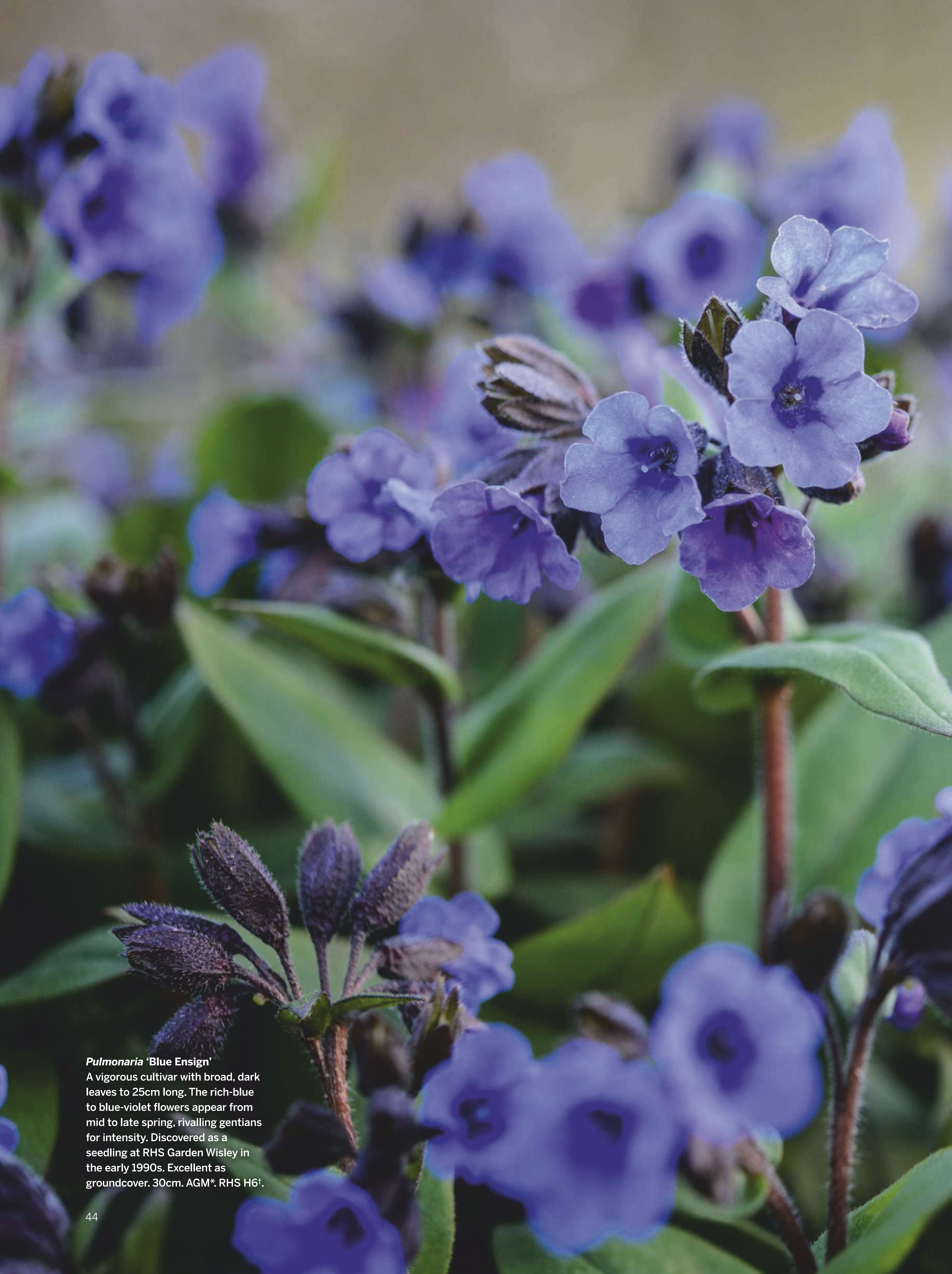








Clockwise from top left
Blocks of yew are staggered in the back bed, which increases the perspective. Clumps of *Libertia chilensis* create vertical accents above the groundcover plants. **A metal tree sculpture by Jivko Sedlarski** is silhouetted against the yew hedge. **The light canopy of multi-stemmed *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*** allows perennials and grasses to flourish beneath. **A pair of wirework jellyfish by Benedetta Mori Ubaldini** create a focal point in the lightwell, framed by columns of *Carpinus betulus*.



***Pulmonaria* ‘Blue Ensign’**
A vigorous cultivar with broad, dark leaves to 25cm long. The rich-blue to blue-violet flowers appear from mid to late spring, rivalling gentians for intensity. Discovered as a seedling at RHS Garden Wisley in the early 1990s. Excellent as groundcover. 30cm. AGM*. RHS H6†.

PULMONARIA

Favoured by renowned cottage gardener Margery Fish at East Lambrook Manor, chance seedlings of pulmonaria have resulted in a host of pretty new cultivars

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

The Doctrine of Signatures – a principle that was established by early physicians, and which became popular in the Middle Ages – stated that plants resembled the condition of the part of the body that they could heal. Since the leaves of *Pulmonaria officinalis*, were marked with white spots it was used, according to the 16th-century herbalist John Gerard, 'against the infirmities and ulcers of the lungs' and as a result became widely known as lungwort. It was grown in gardens for centuries as a medicinal plant, as it was thought that an infusion of the leaves would act as a treatment for lung ailments. Although there's no evidence that this is the case, the young foliage is palatable and can be added to salads.

Pulmonarias didn't become widespread for ornamental use until the late, great gardener Margery Fish began enthusing about their virtues in her books based on the garden she created at East Lambrook Manor in Somerset, in the early 1960s. In *Cottage Garden Flowers* she records how welcome they are in the early spring garden 'often rising above the snow and fluttering unconcernedly in the bitter winds of March'. In a later book *Ground Cover Plants,* she advises a practical use for the coral-flowered species: '*P. rubra* has luxuriant leaves and there will be no weeds where it grows'.

Nectar-rich and appearing at a time of year when flowers are scarce, pulmonarias are very popular with bees. Their propensity to hybridise and self-seed freely has led to a host of cultivars appearing as chance seedlings in gardens and nurseries. *Pulmonaria* 'Barfield Regalia', a large-leaved semi-evergreen, with violet-blue to dark-blue flowers originally came from the garden of East Lambrook Manor. As did *Pulmonaria* 'Margery Fish' with pink buds and blue flowers with narrow leaves that are usually spotted but sometimes completely silver and is also mildew resistant. Margery, however, was not the only plantsperson to find desirable seedlings or have a plant carrying their name. The first variegated cultivar, *Pulmonaria rubra* 'David Ward', with white leaf margins, was found in Beth Chatto's nursery in Essex in around 1986 and named for the nursery's plant propagator; *Pulmonaria longifolia* 'Bertram Anderson', which has boldly blotched leaves and bright-blue flowers commemorates the founder of the Alpine Garden Society and *Pulmonaria* 'Roy Davidson', with narrow leaves that are lightly spotted and pale to mid-blue flowers that fade to pink, was selected from the garden of, and named for, a late Seattle plantsman. Others were found in nurseries. *Pulmonaria* 'Mrs Kittle' appeared in a small nursery in the village of Kittle in south Wales, and was popularised by the Dutch nurseryman Coen Jansen. The original *Pulmonaria* 'Mawson's Blue' first appeared at Mawson's Nursery in Cumbria in the 1930s and *Pulmonaria saccharata* 'Reginald Kaye' a semi-evergreen hybrid that has large, rounded leaves, with large silver spots in the centre and smaller spots around the edge, and flowers that turn from pink to light blue, originated in the nursery of Reginald Kaye in Lancashire and was introduced by Beth Chatto.

Newer cultivars have arrived as a result of specific breeding programmes, particularly in the USA during the early part of this century. Plants are still being selected for their traditional virtues of flower colour, and leaf markings, but the spots and splashes have now extended to producing cultivars in a new style where the whole leaf is predominantly silvery-grey. This not only creates an interesting foil for the flowers but extends the season of interest. Leaves can now be used to contrast with summer-flowering, shade-loving plants, such as herbaceous geraniums. This new generation, including the heat-tolerant *Pulmonaria* 'High Contrast', which has ruffled silvered leaves and *Pulmonaria* 'Excalibur', which has leaves of pure silver has transformed a coy cottage garden favourite into a modern extrovert that is equally at home in a contemporary space. ❑

• Author Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener, TV presenter and the author of several books. He is also a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. His recommendations for the best pulmonarias continue over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

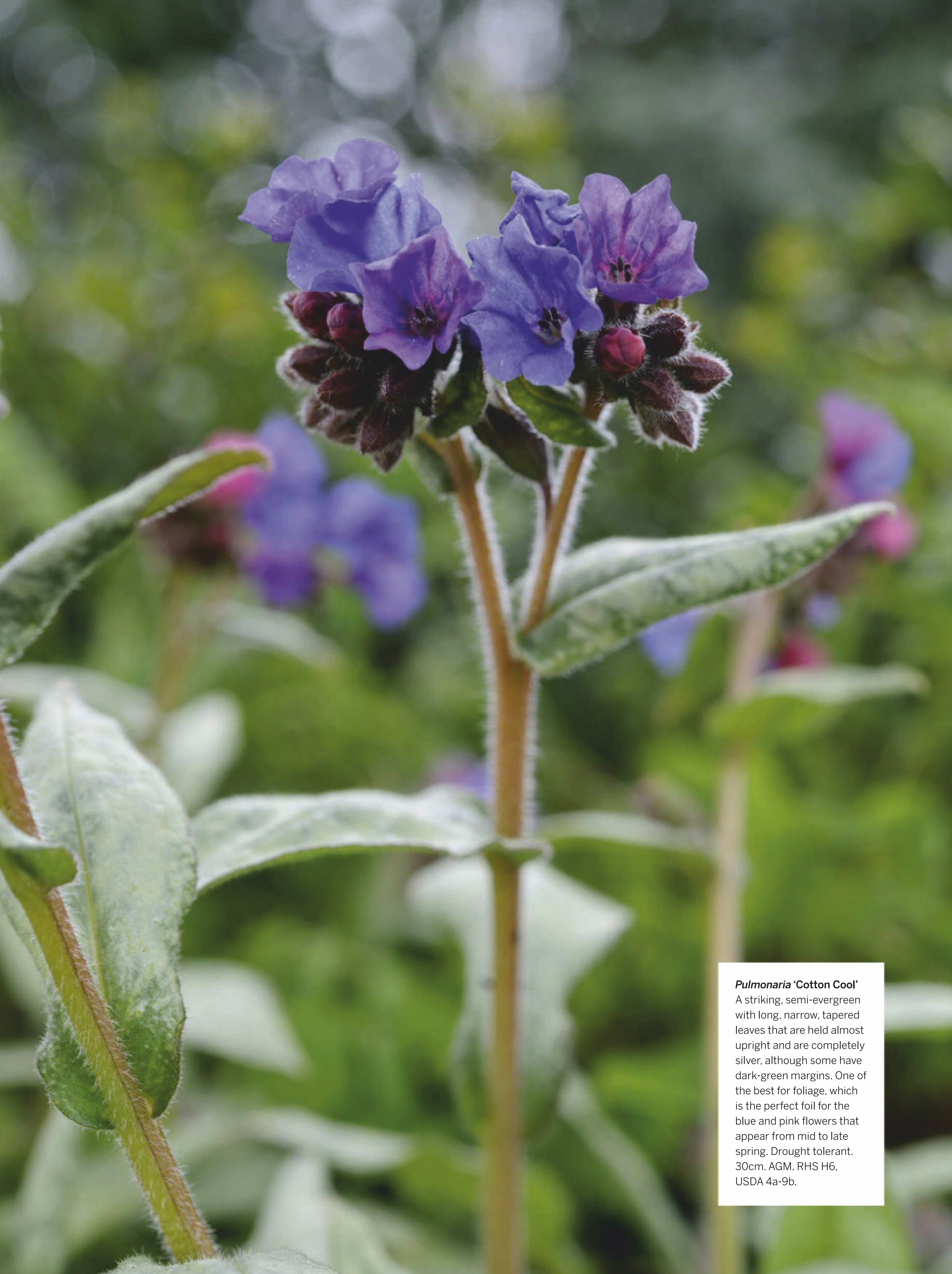
What Evergreen, semi-evergreen or deciduous herbaceous perennial members of the Boraginaceae family. Clump-forming or spreading to 30cm tall. The leaves vary from narrow and lance-shaped to heart-shaped, and the flowers are carried on short, usually unbranched, stems just above the foliage.

Origins Pulmonarias are widely distributed in Europe and western Asia in mountains and moist, shady places. The genus is composed of 18 species but only eight are known in cultivation.

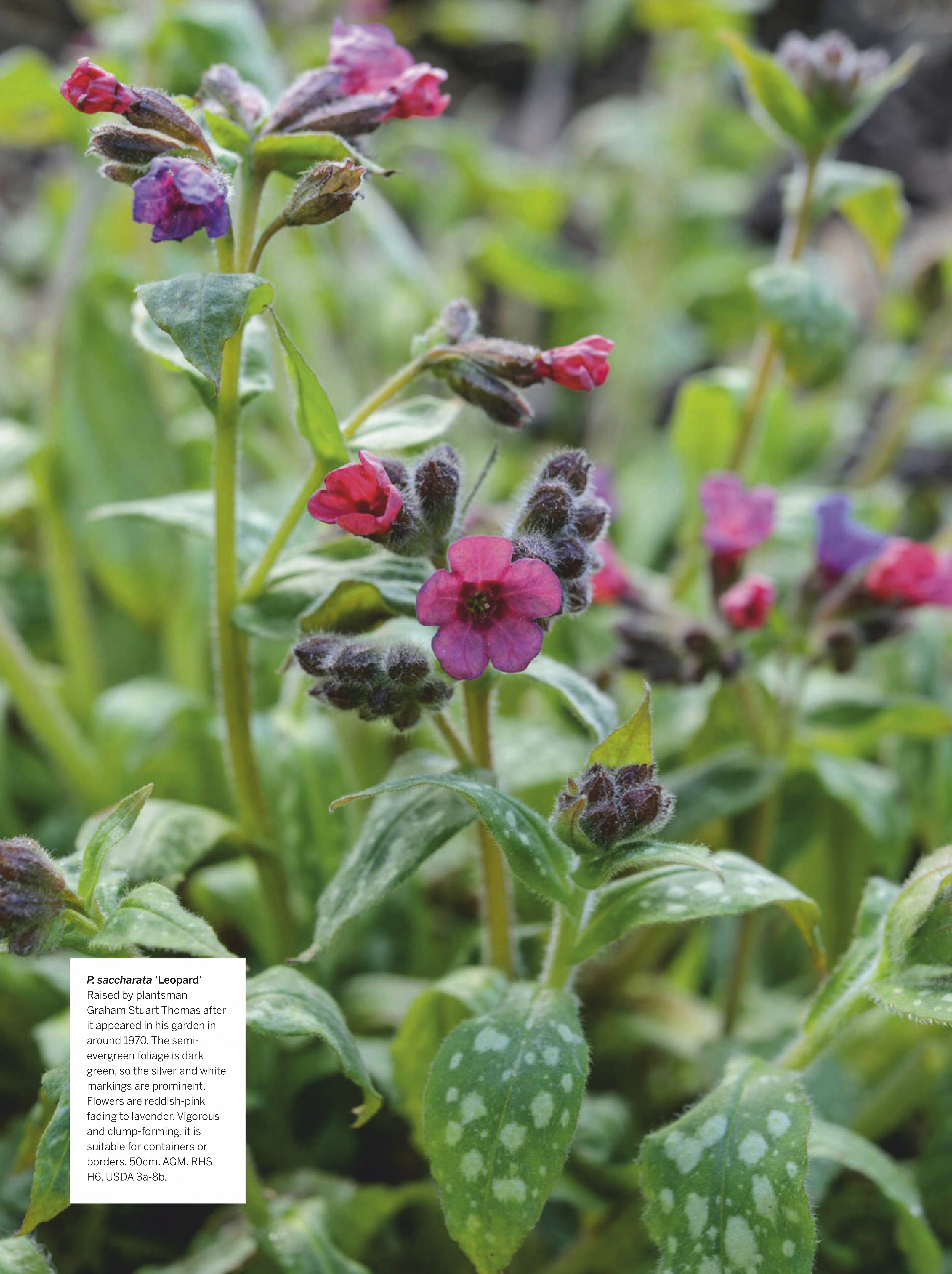
Season Flowers appear at any time from late winter to mid spring, lasting in a few cases, until early summer. The ornamental leaves are a feature during the growing season or beyond in evergreen forms.

Hardiness Most are hardy down to -40°C, with some tolerating -45°C. Most suffer at temperatures above 20°C.

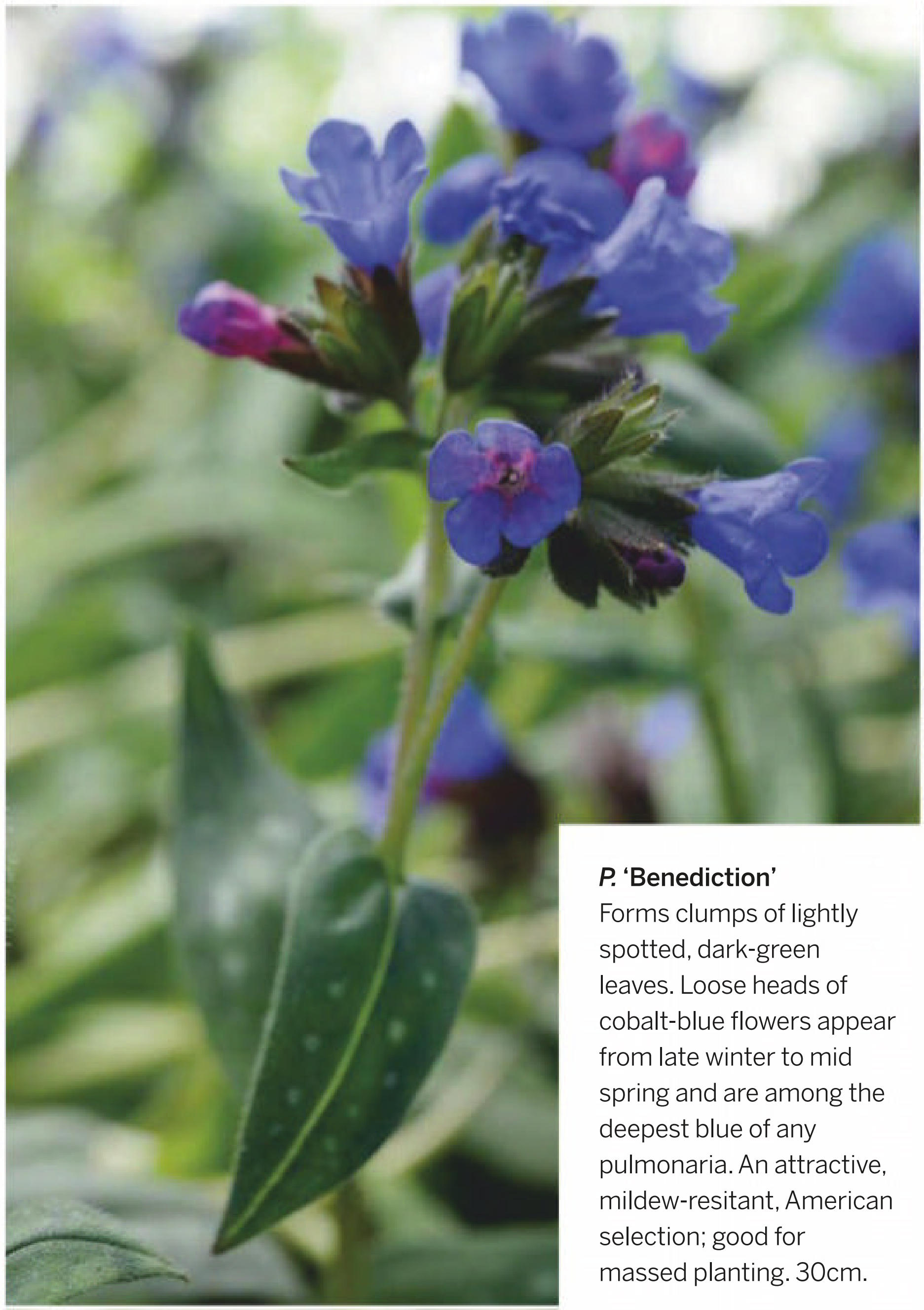
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



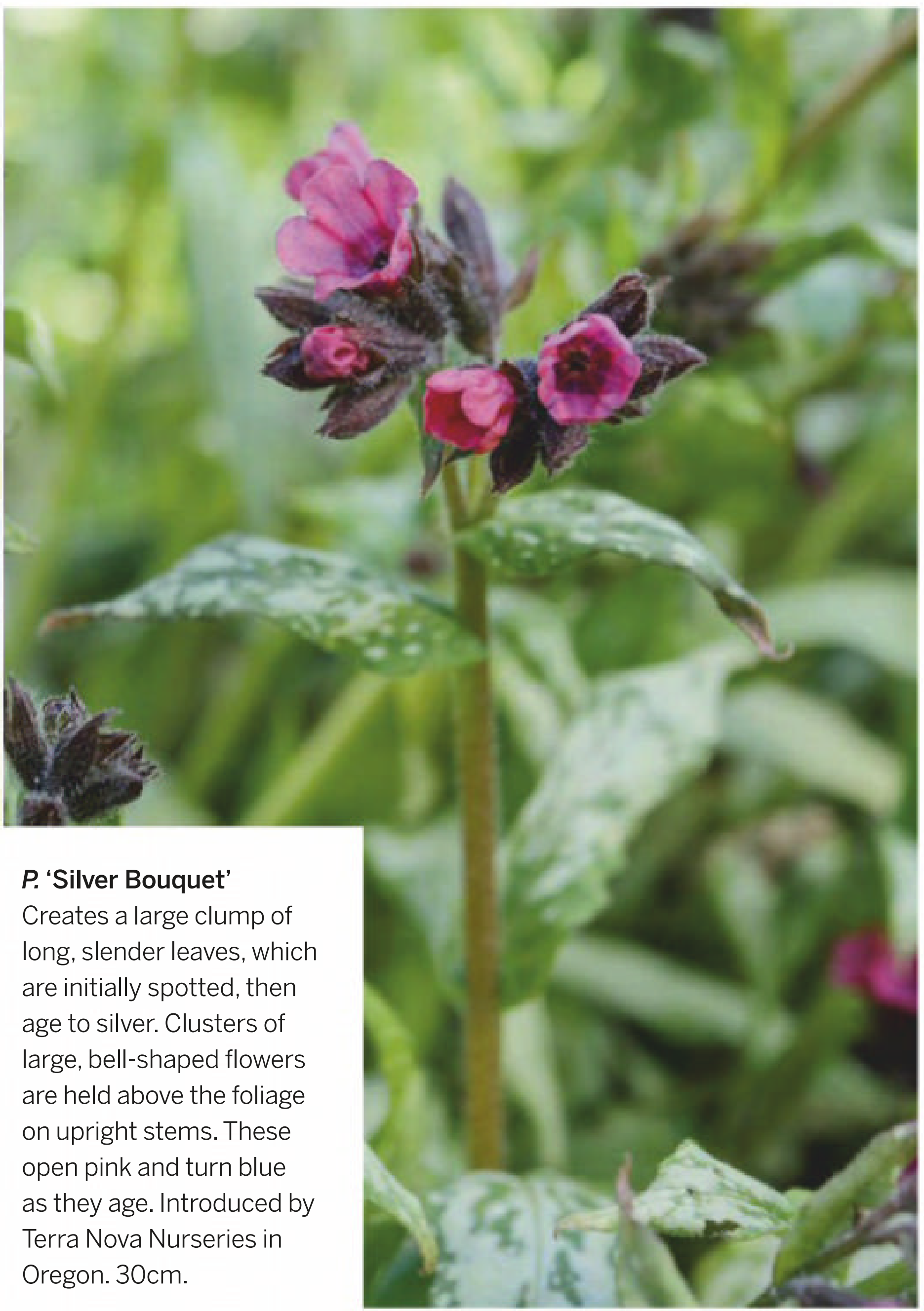
***Pulmonaria* 'Cotton Cool'**
A striking, semi-evergreen with long, narrow, tapered leaves that are held almost upright and are completely silver, although some have dark-green margins. One of the best for foliage, which is the perfect foil for the blue and pink flowers that appear from mid to late spring. Drought tolerant. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.



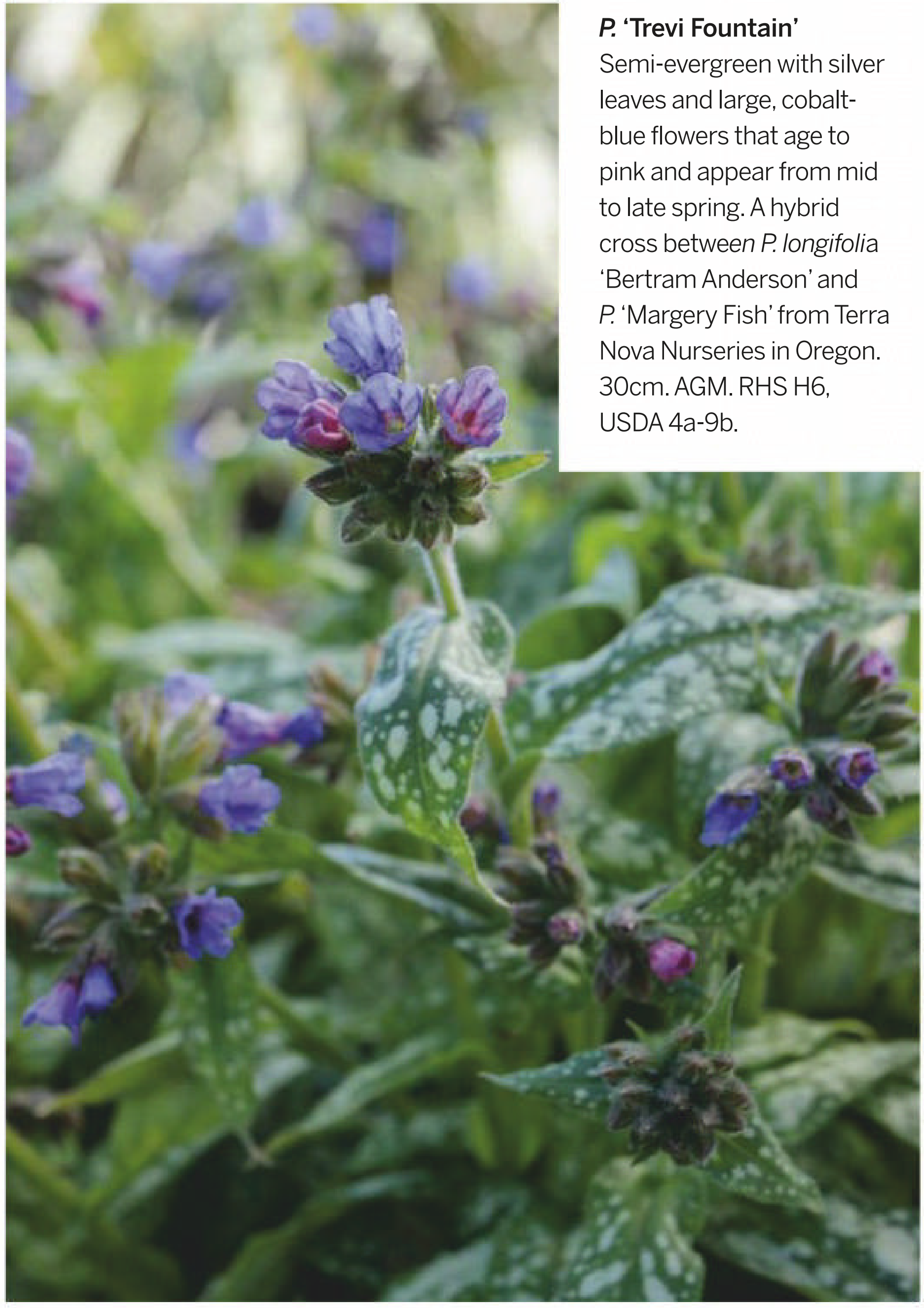
P. saccharata 'Leopard'
Raised by plantsman Graham Stuart Thomas after it appeared in his garden in around 1970. The semi-evergreen foliage is dark green, so the silver and white markings are prominent. Flowers are reddish-pink fading to lavender. Vigorous and clump-forming, it is suitable for containers or borders. 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.



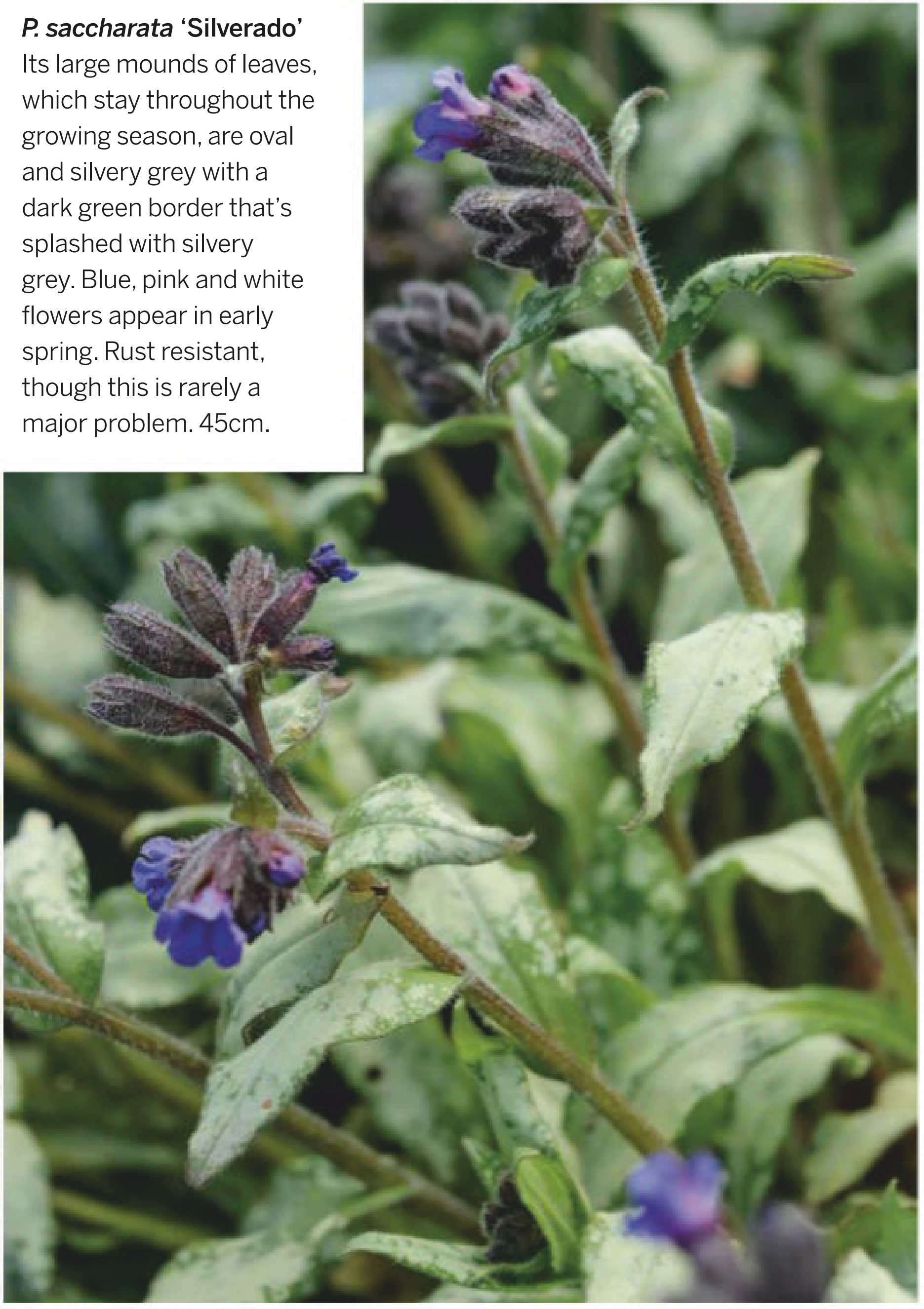
***P.* ‘Benediction’**
Forms clumps of lightly spotted, dark-green leaves. Loose heads of cobalt-blue flowers appear from late winter to mid spring and are among the deepest blue of any pulmonaria. An attractive, mildew-resitant, American selection; good for massed planting. 30cm.



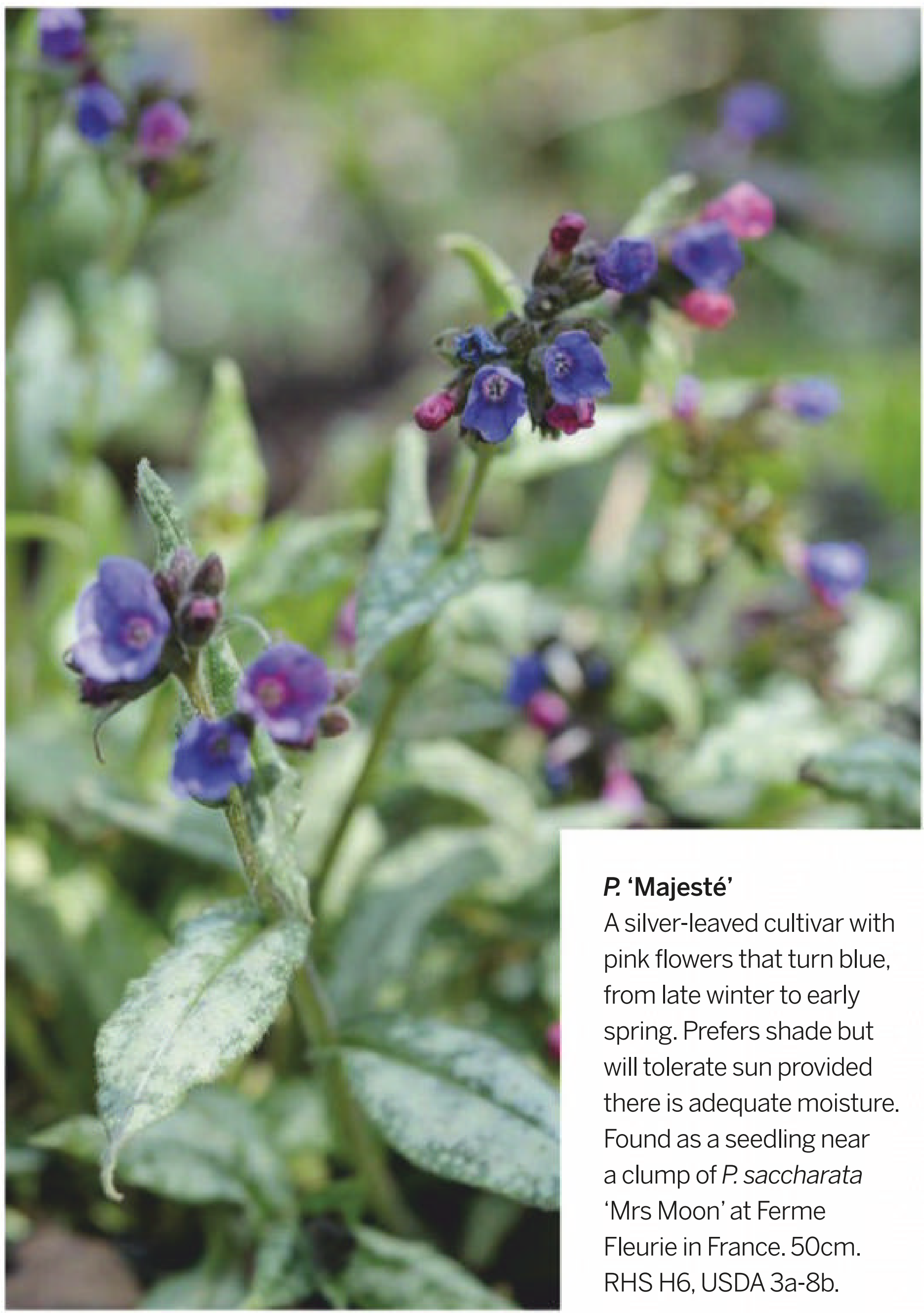
***P.* ‘Silver Bouquet’**
Creates a large clump of long, slender leaves, which are initially spotted, then age to silver. Clusters of large, bell-shaped flowers are held above the foliage on upright stems. These open pink and turn blue as they age. Introduced by Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon. 30cm.



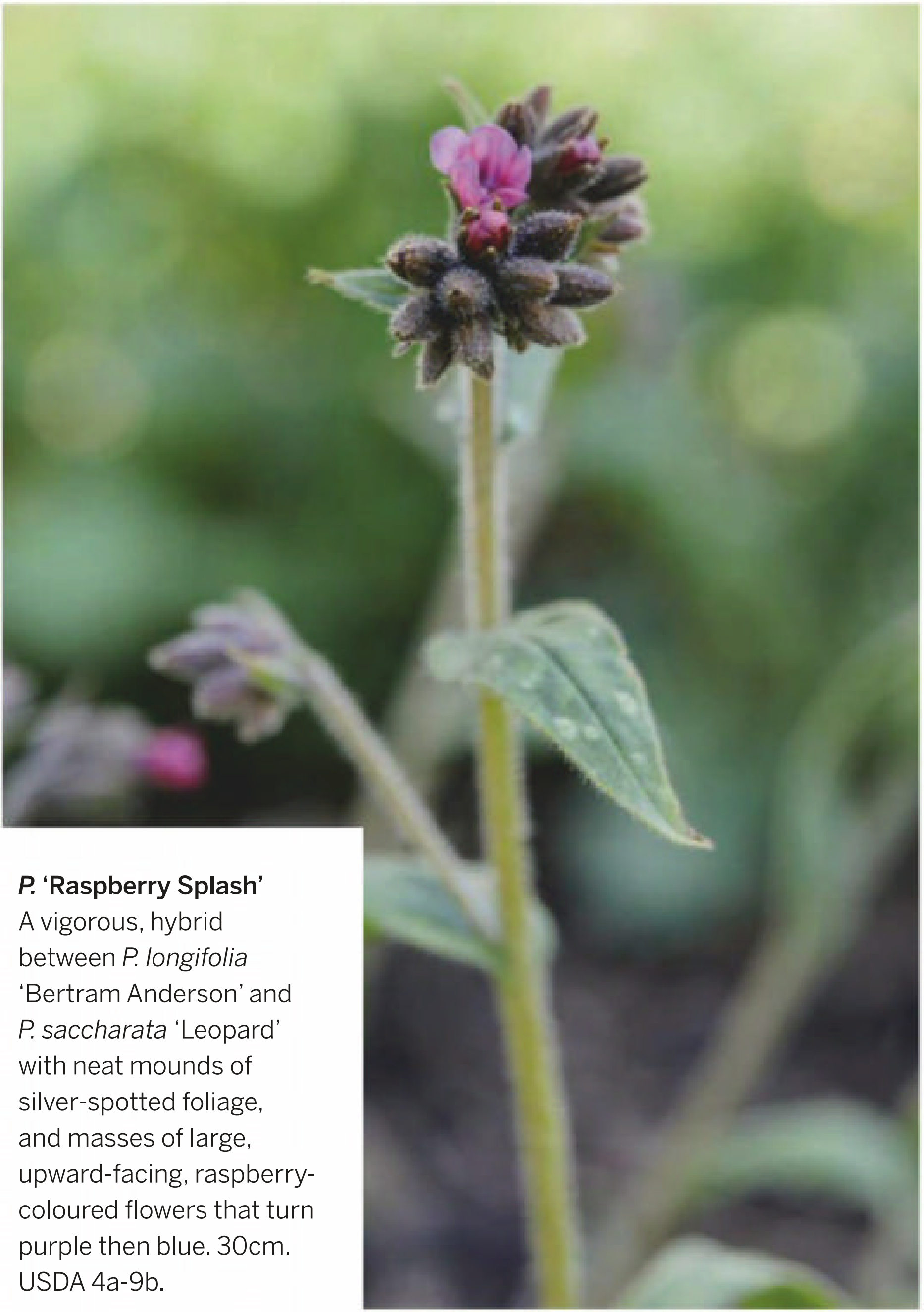
***P.* ‘Trevi Fountain’**
Semi-evergreen with silver leaves and large, cobalt-blue flowers that age to pink and appear from mid to late spring. A hybrid cross between *P. longifolia* ‘Bertram Anderson’ and *P.* ‘Margery Fish’ from Terra Nova Nurseries in Oregon. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.



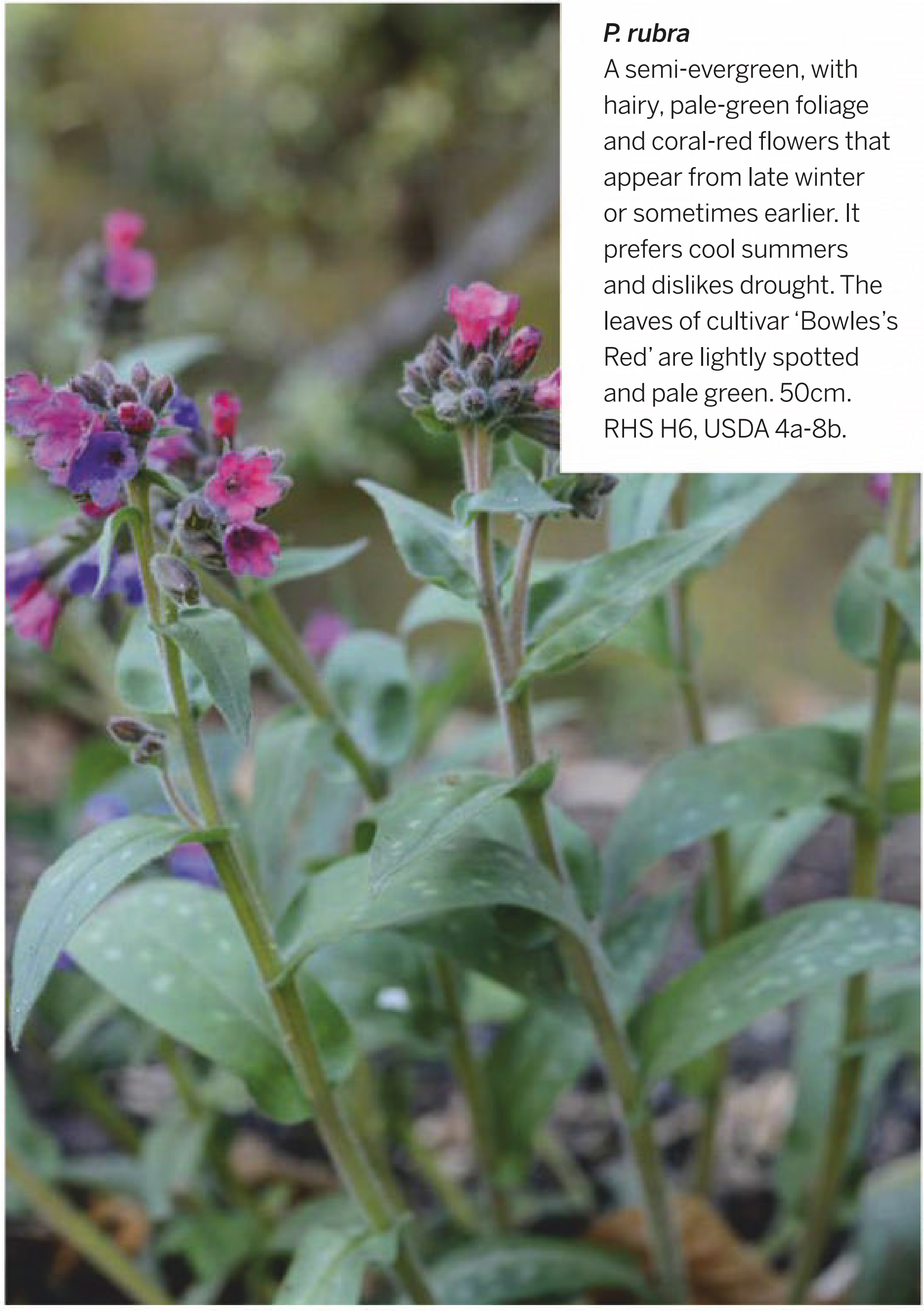
***P. saccharata* ‘Silverado’**
Its large mounds of leaves, which stay throughout the growing season, are oval and silvery grey with a dark green border that’s splashed with silvery grey. Blue, pink and white flowers appear in early spring. Rust resistant, though this is rarely a major problem. 45cm.



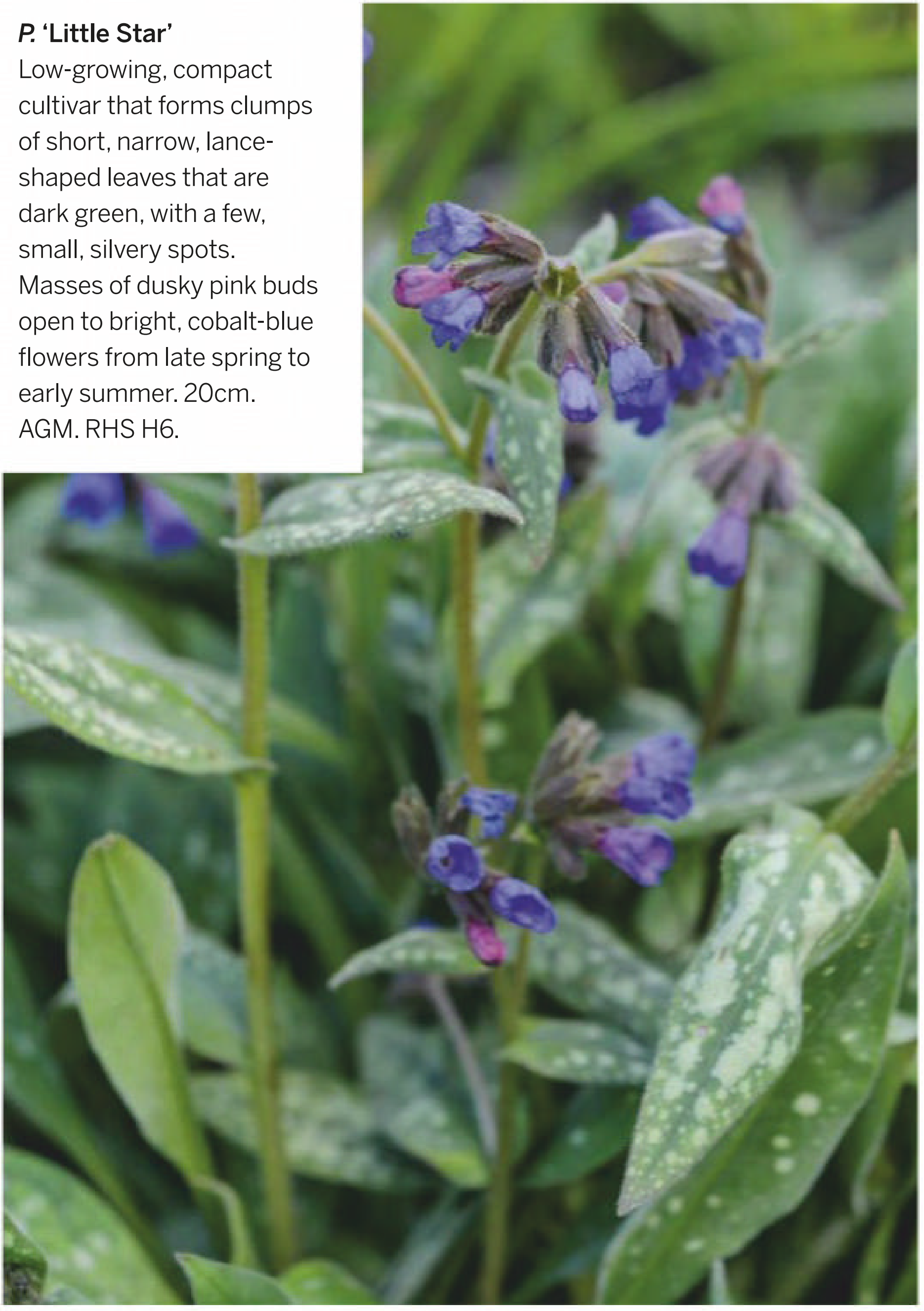
_P._ 'Majesté'
A silver-leaved cultivar with pink flowers that turn blue, from late winter to early spring. Prefers shade but will tolerate sun provided there is adequate moisture. Found as a seedling near a clump of *P. saccharata* 'Mrs Moon' at Ferme Fleurie in France. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.



_P._ 'Raspberry Splash'
A vigorous, hybrid between *P. longifolia* 'Bertram Anderson' and *P. saccharata* 'Leopard' with neat mounds of silver-spotted foliage, and masses of large, upward-facing, raspberry-coloured flowers that turn purple then blue. 30cm. USDA 4a-9b.

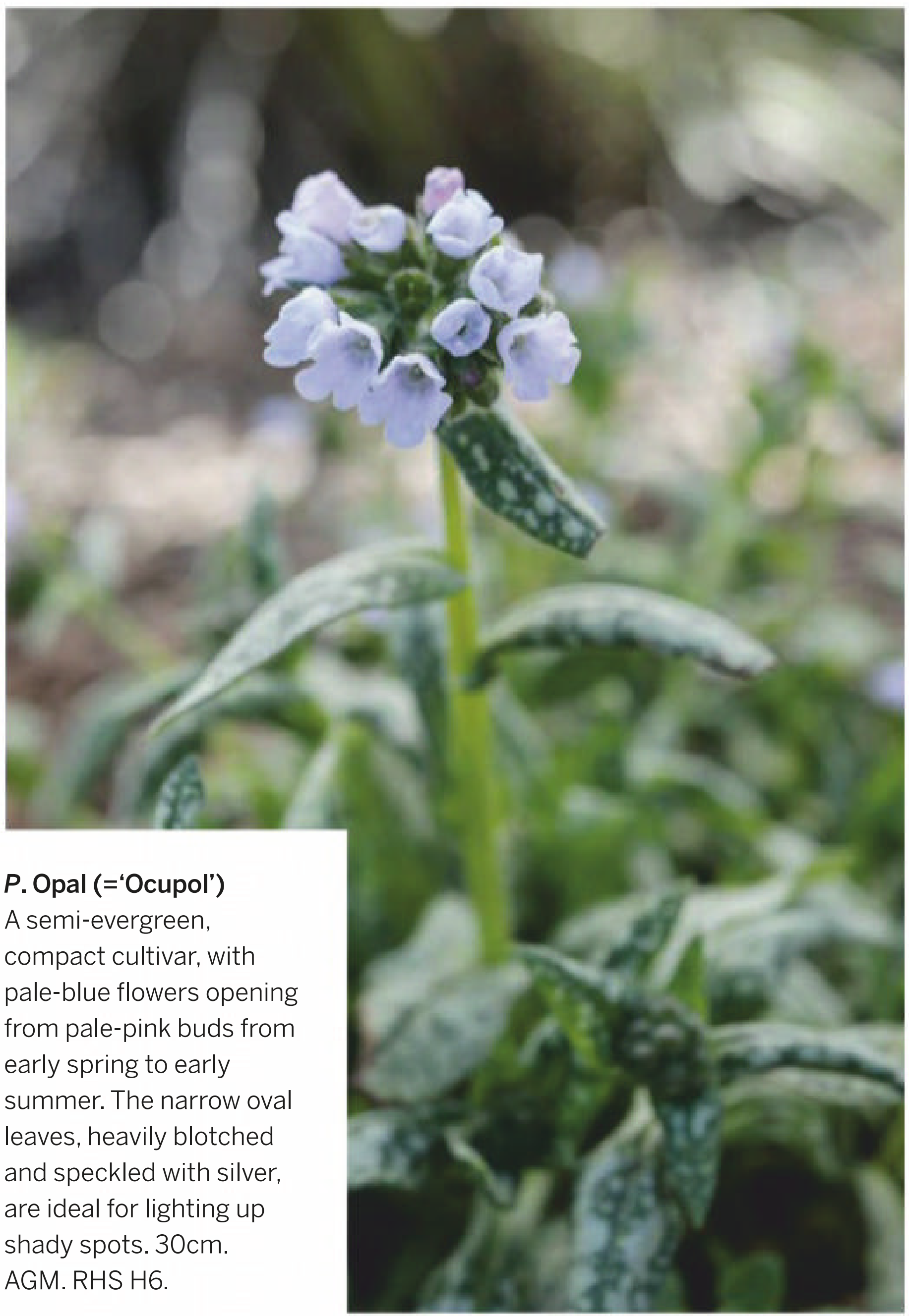


P. rubra
A semi-evergreen, with hairy, pale-green foliage and coral-red flowers that appear from late winter or sometimes earlier. It prefers cool summers and dislikes drought. The leaves of cultivar 'Bowles's Red' are lightly spotted and pale green. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

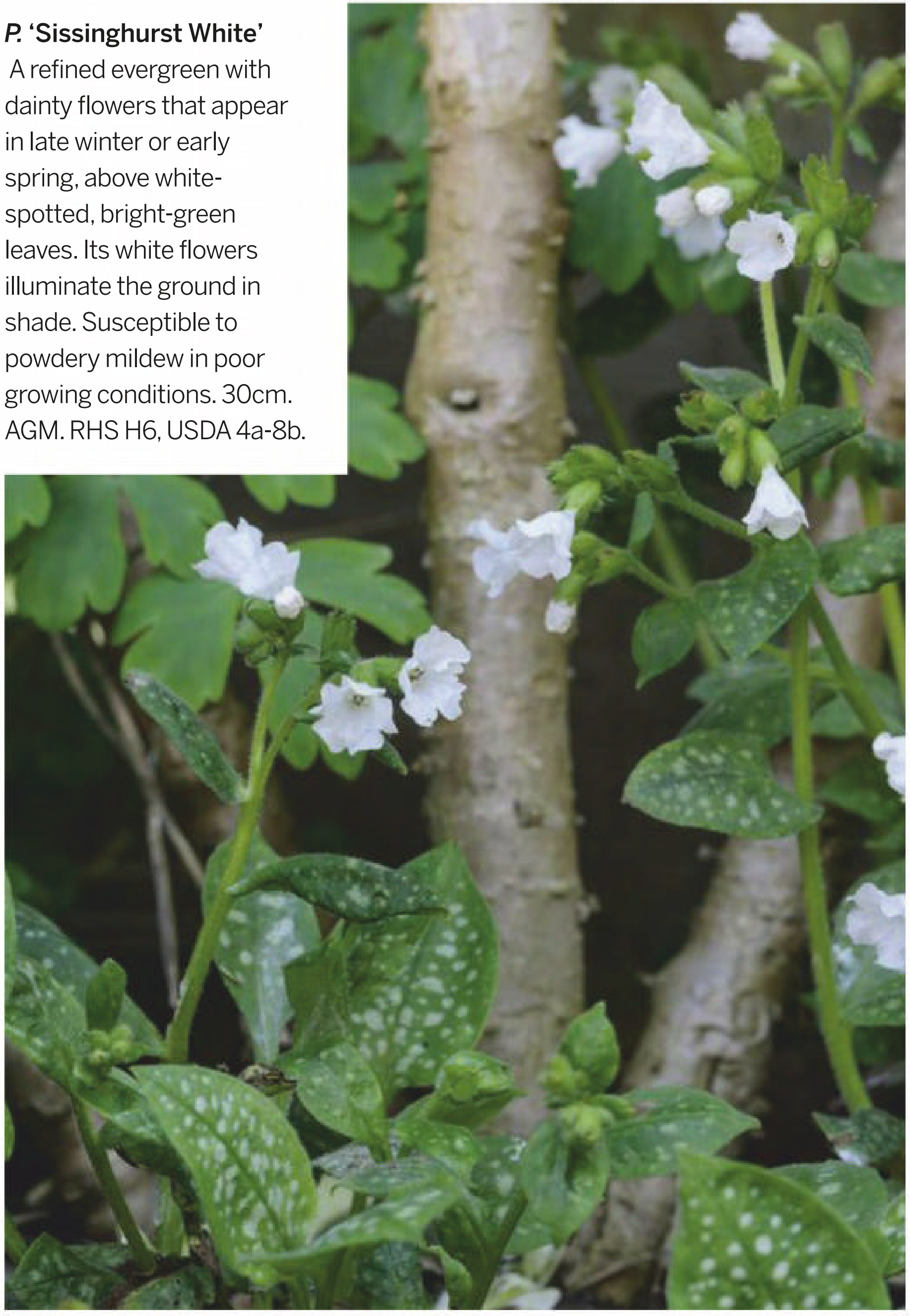


_P._ 'Little Star'
Low-growing, compact cultivar that forms clumps of short, narrow, lance-shaped leaves that are dark green, with a few, small, silvery spots. Masses of dusky pink buds open to bright, cobalt-blue flowers from late spring to early summer. 20cm. AGM. RHS H6.

MANY THANKS TO BARRY STREET OF THE PULMONARIA GROUP OF THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY IN WHOSE GARDEN MOST OF THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.



***P*. Opal (=‘Ocupol’)**
A semi-evergreen, compact cultivar, with pale-blue flowers opening from pale-pink buds from early spring to early summer. The narrow oval leaves, heavily blotched and speckled with silver, are ideal for lighting up shady spots. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6.



***P.* ‘Sissinghurst White’**
A refined evergreen with dainty flowers that appear in late winter or early spring, above white-spotted, bright-green leaves. Its white flowers illuminate the ground in shade. Susceptible to powdery mildew in poor growing conditions. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Cultivation

Pulmonarias flourish in part shade in moisture-retentive but free-draining, humus-rich soil, although some are tolerant of sun, if they are given plenty of moisture. Lightly mulch in spring with well-rotted organic matter and deadhead immediately after flowering to prevent self-seeding. Clear dead foliage from deciduous forms in autumn, and tidy up evergreen cultivars in spring, cutting them hard back. Water and feed with a slow-release fertiliser and new foliage will rapidly emerge. Pulmonarias are generally short-lived, so to ensure longevity, clumps should be divided after flowering every three to five years. This is particularly true of the cultivar ‘Sissinghurst White’. Evergreens can become semi-evergreen in colder climates.

Powdery mildew is a problem in hot, dry conditions and the first sign that plants are unhappy. A greyish powdery coating appears on the upper and lower surface of the leaves and, in extreme cases, individual patches join together, coating the whole plant, weakening them to a point that growth and flowering are poor and they look unattractive. Be vigilant. Take preventative action by watering well before the onset of drought, remove infected leaves immediately before the problem spreads, then boost growth by feeding with a dilute, high-potash fertiliser to toughen growth. If plants are badly affected, cut them back to the base, dispose of infected leaves away from the garden, water and new leaves will emerge later in the year. Some, especially more recent American introductions, are resistant to mildew, including ‘Apple Frost’, ‘Benediction’, ‘Cotton Cool’, ’Margery Fish’, ‘Milky Way’, ‘Raspberry Splash’, ‘Silver Bouquet’ and ‘Victorian Brooch’.

Pulmonarias look wonderful planted with bergenias, such as ‘Overture’, which holds magenta flowers above scarlet stems in mid spring and the leaves of which turn dark claret in cold weather, or ‘Bressingham Ruby’, which boasts a fanfare of deep ruby leaves in winter, with crimson undersides, red stems and rose-pink flowers.

Pale-flowered and silver-leaved pulmonarias contrast well with dark-leaved heucheras, such as ‘Obsidian’ or they can break up the sultry forms of dark *Helleborus* x *hybridus*. They also associate well with other dainty plants, including snowdrops, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* ‘Nigrescens’ and *Cyclamen coum*. The blue-flowered forms accentuate clear-yellows of *Erythronium* ‘Pagoda’ and *Narcissus* ‘Jetfire’. Plant those with silver foliage in bold associations with acid greens of early euphorbias, the pretty Bowles’s golden grass, *Milium effusum* ‘Aureum’, or at the base of dark tree trunks, such as the shiny mahogany *Prunus serrula* or the dark chocolate-coloured *Prunus rufa*. Paler flower colours are ideal for underplanting tulips or among the fresh green foliage of emerging ferns.

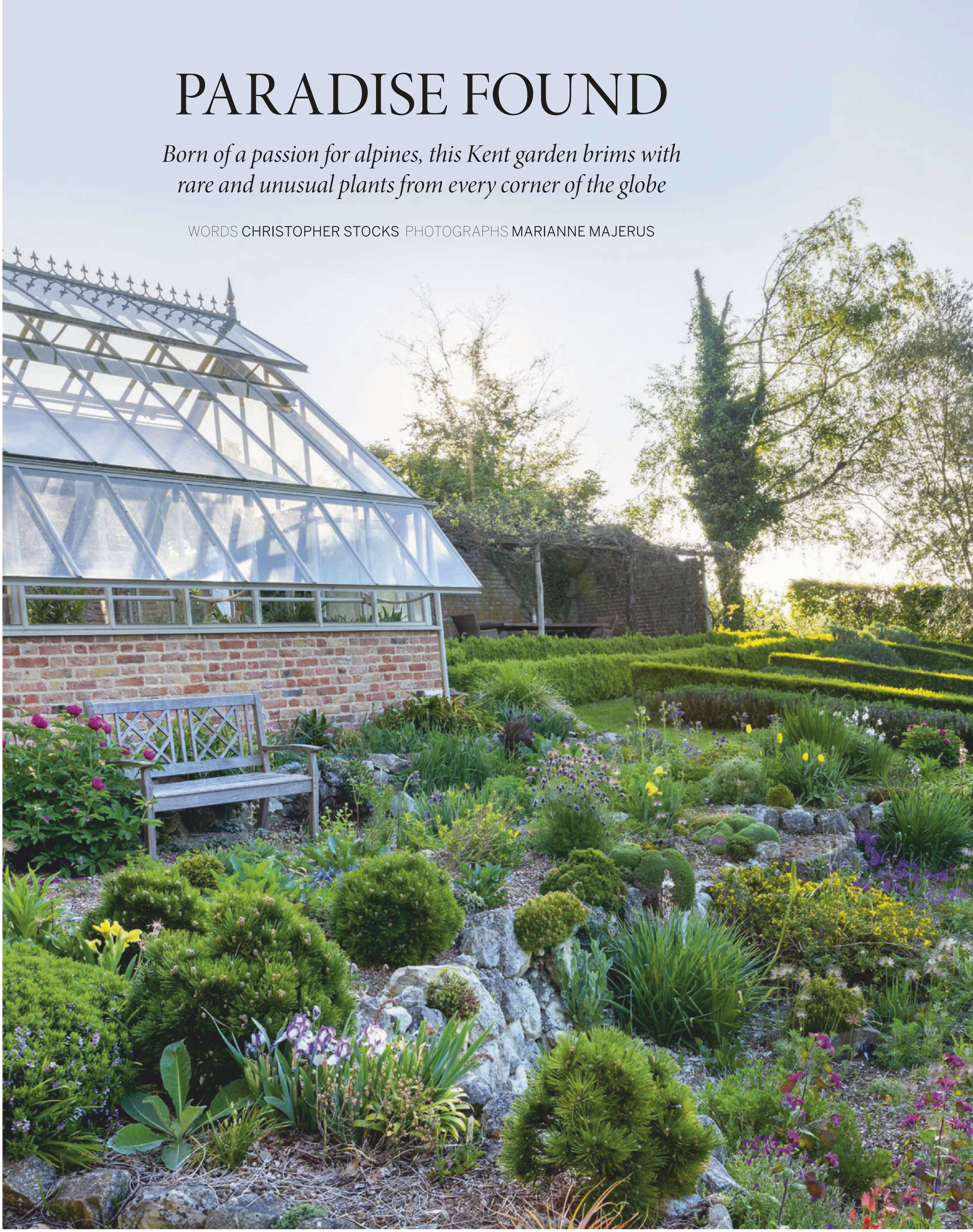
Where to buy

- **Boldre Nurseries**
  Southampton Road,
  Lymington,
  Hampshire SO41 8ND.
  Tel 01590 670581,
  heucheraholics.co.uk
- **Claire Austin Hardy Plants**
  White Hopton Farm
  Wern Lane, Sarn, Newtown,
  Powys SY16 4EN.
  Tel 01686 670342,
  claireaustin-hardy
  plants.co.uk
- **Norwell Nurseries**
  Woodhouse Road
  Norwell, Newark,
  Nottinghamshire NG23 6JX.
  Tel 01636 636337,
  norwellnurseries.co.uk
- **Stillingfleet Lodge Gardens & Nurseries**
  Stewart Lane, Stillingfleet,
  York YO19 6HP.
  Tel 01904 728506,
  stillingfleetlodge
  nurseries.co.uk

PARADISE FOUND

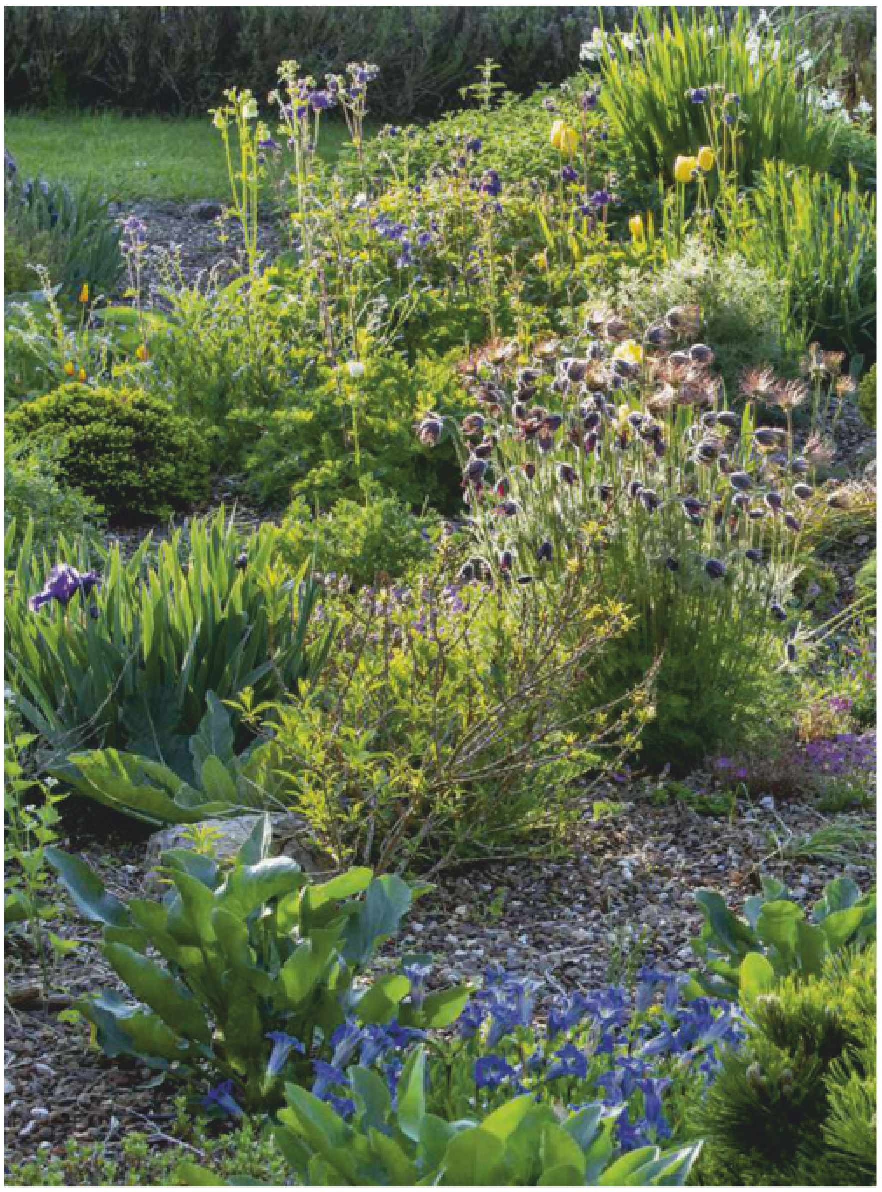
Born of a passion for alpines, this Kent garden brims with rare and unusual plants from every corner of the globe

WORDS **CHRISTOPHER STOCKS** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**



IN BRIEF

Name Boyton Court.
What Plantsman's garden.
Where Kent.
Size 3.7 acres.
Soil Rocky loam.
Climate Warm summers, low rainfall, frosts in winter.
Hardiness zone USDA 9a.

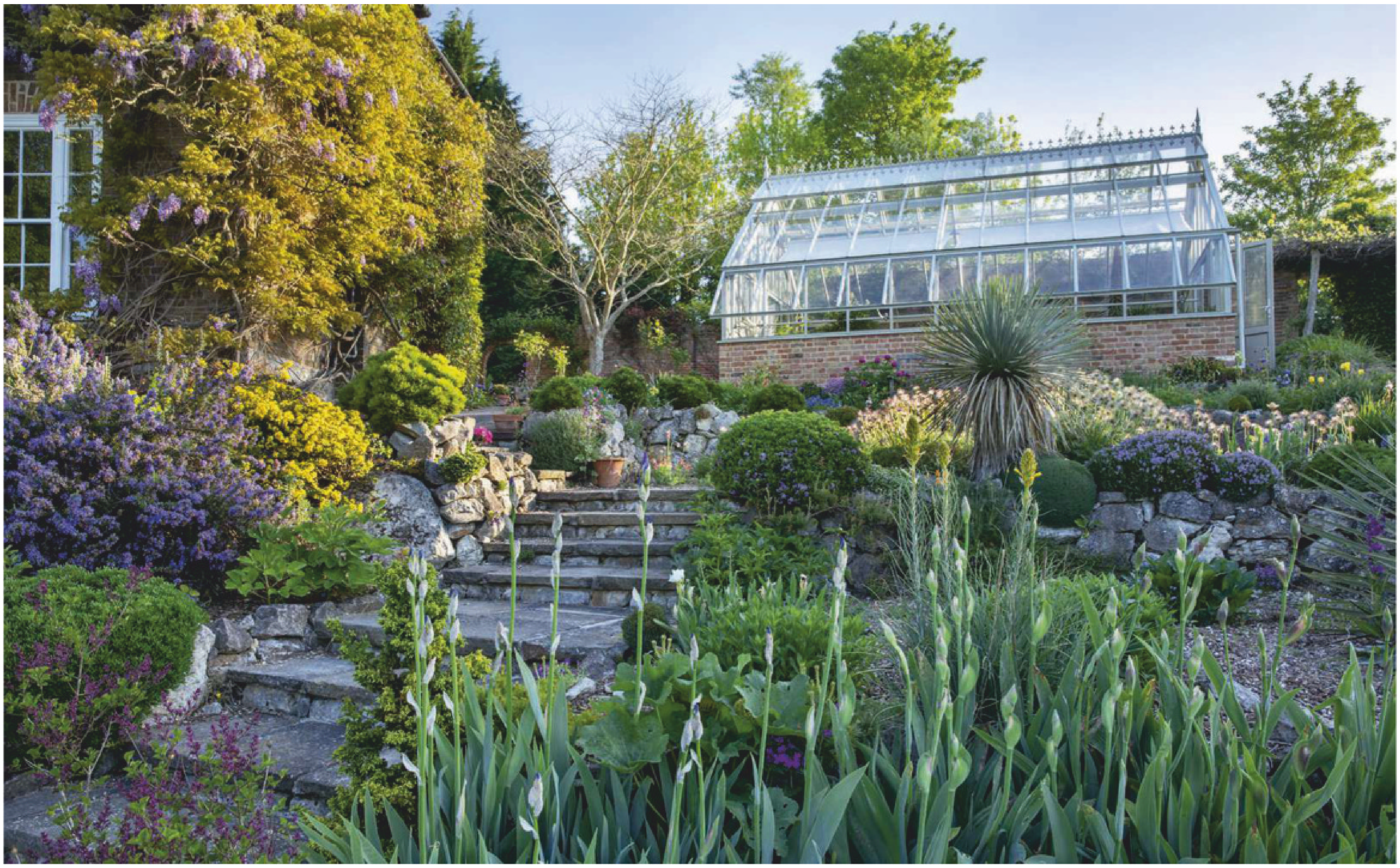


All serious gardeners must dream of the perfect plot. Sheltered, south-facing, free from frost, with rich, neutral soil and a steady supply of water. Envy, then, Dr Adrian Cooper, who after a successful career in the oil industry found just such a spot in 2011 at Boyton Court in Kent. An ancient farmhouse that has been modestly extended over the years, Boyton Court stands at 57 metres above sea level, sheltered below the summit of a high ridge with wide views south across the Vale of Kent. Watered by steadily flowing natural springs, its 3.7-acre garden slopes down from the house, and over the past century has been gradually reshaped into a series of terraces, formal enclosures, ponds and lawns. The soil, a rocky loam over the underlying Kentish ragstone, is an almost neutral pH7.5.

When Adrian and his family bought Boyton Court they inherited the formal elements of the garden and a few choice plants, including a large *Camellia sasanqua* in the walled enclosure behind the house. Yet what was a fairly conventional country garden has been transformed into a true plantsman's garden, packed with around 3,000 wild species from every corner of the globe, as well as hundreds of garden hybrids and cultivars. "I've tried to create a garden that has a magical feel," Adrian says. "I've always been drawn to rare and difficult-to-grow plants, but I take almost as much pleasure in the humble forget-me-not." Over the past eight years Adrian has revivified the large ▷

Main image The scree garden below the alpine house includes yellow *Daphne calcicola*, the seedheads from a naturalised colony of *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, and a grove of tiny 20-year-old Bosnian pines, *Pinus leucodermis* 'Schmidtii'. To the left of the bench is a pink *Paeonia officinalis* subsp. *banatica* that owner Adrian Cooper grew from seed.

Above Another view of the scree garden, with cushions of alpine *Dianthus* and blue *Gentiana acaulis*.



▷ rockery below the house, added a scree garden, a sheltered area for ericaceous plants, an alpine house, a bulb house, a neo-tropical house, a xerophyte house and an arboretum.

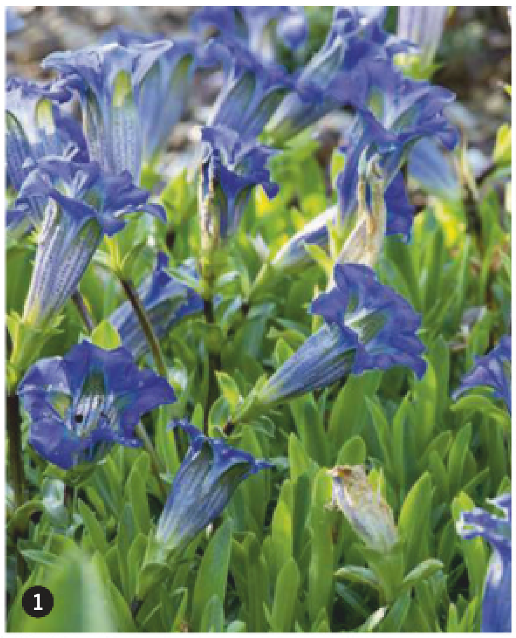
Although Adrian has extensive knowledge and hands-on expertise, he is almost entirely self-taught. "I started gardening when was eight, and within a year I had my own flowerbed, which I filled with alpines. Then when I was 12 my parents took me to Ingwersens [the famous alpine nursery in Sussex, which closed in 2008] and things changed forever." That same year Adrian's parents and grandparents bought him his first alpine house and he joined the Alpine Garden Society (AGS). He's been a member ever since, and sits on the board of trustees, as well as running AGS shows in Kent and giving private tours of his garden to AGS groups. Remarkably, he still has two plants (*Primula allionii* and *Erinacea anthyllis*) from that first visit to Ingwersens.

The alpine house Adrian has built for his collection is packed with rare and wonderful things, but the real surprise is the number of rare and challenging alpines he grows in the open air. These include the highly sought-after *Paris polyphylla* var. *yunnanensis* f. *alba*, which has been naturalised on the banks of a boggy rill, where its large pink blooms look particularly exotic.

Most people would be happy to have one collection of such quality and extent, but Adrian's energy and enthusiasm has ▷

Above View up beyond the Olive Terraces, with flag irises in bud in the foreground and daphnes draped over drystone walls. The alpine house has been specially designed for maximum ventilation and has widely spaced glazing bars to admit maximum light. The base is built from reclaimed bricks and uses lime mortar.

Right View showing some of the diverse planting in the Olive Terraces, including peony species, various daphnes and irises, *Yucca whipplei* and *Yucca rostrata.*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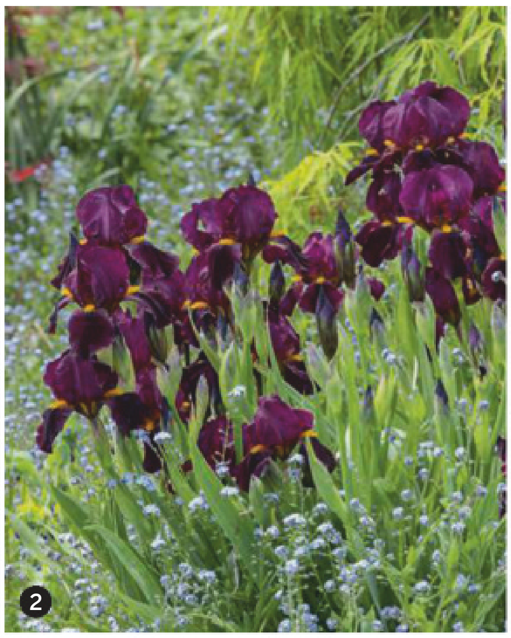
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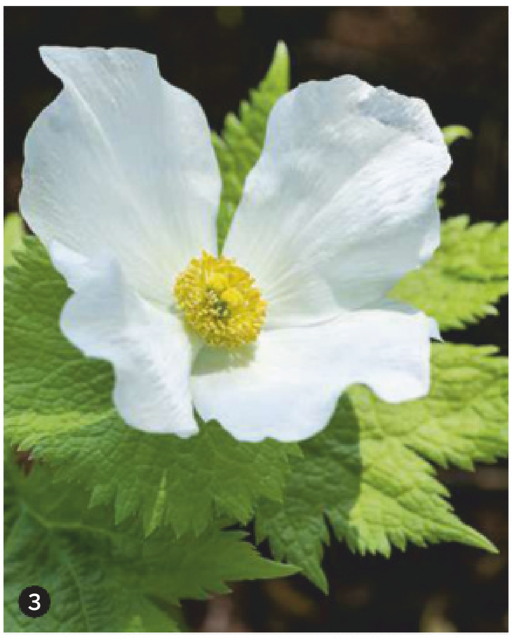
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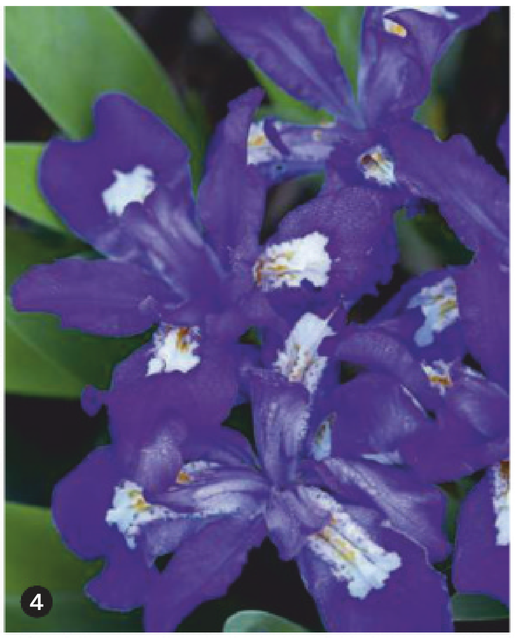
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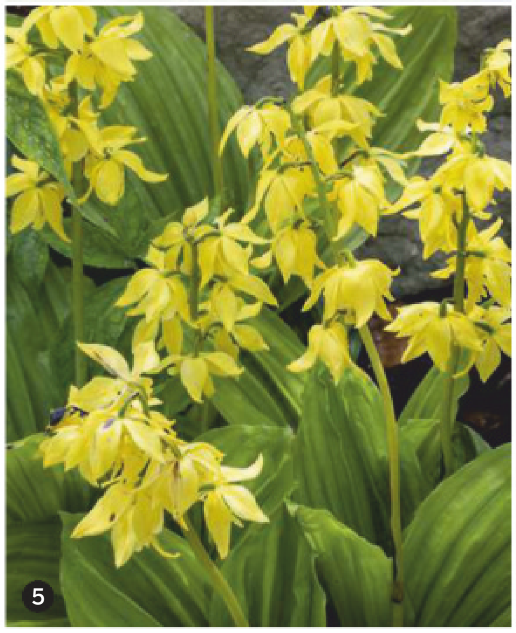
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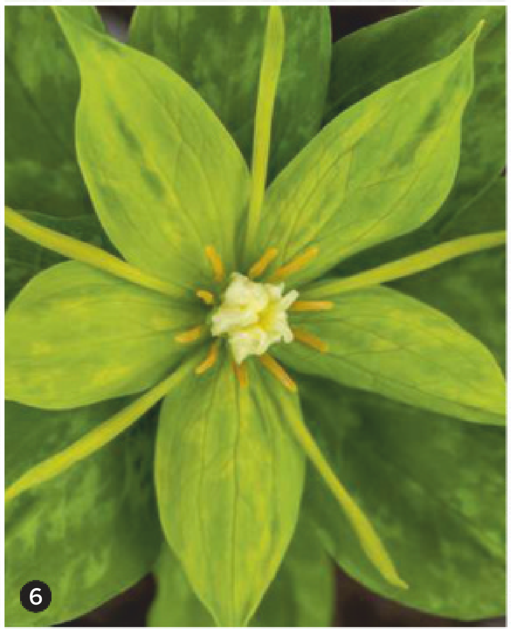
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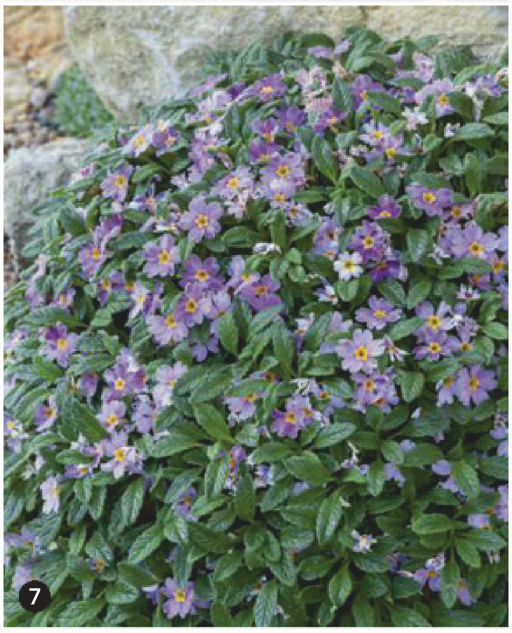
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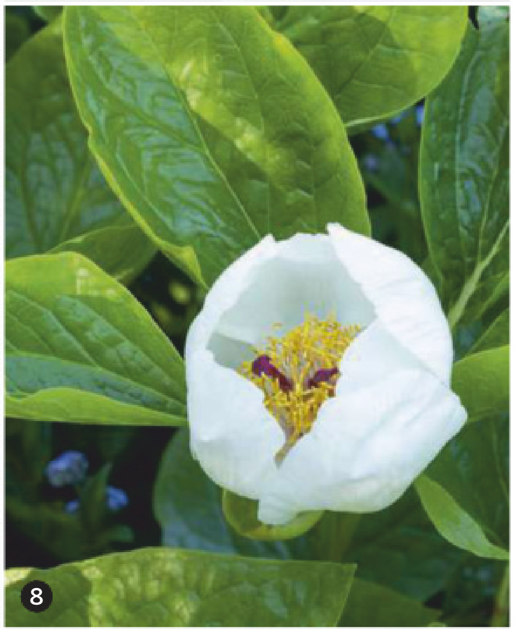
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8 KEY ALPINE PLANTS

1 *Gentiana acaulis* Generally an easy plant to grow outside, this large-flowered gentian thrives in a sunny spot in Adrian's scree garden throughout the year, with peak flowering in spring. 6cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b†.

2 *Iris pumila* hybrid Easy-to-grow dwarf bearded iris. Prefers a sunny scree. 10cm.

3 *Glaucidium palmatum* 'Album' A choice Japanese woodland perennial, with large, poppy-like, white flowers in spring. Happiest in moist, peaty conditions. 40cm. USDA 5a-9b.

4 *Iris cristata* Rapidly spreading, low-growing dwarf crested iris, ideal in woodland areas with some sun. Stemless, violet flowers have a conspicuous white patch with a narrow orange crest on each fall. 8cm. RHS H6.

5 *Calanthe striata* Known until recently as *Calanthe sieboldii*, this orchid is the only plant in this selection that Adrian grows inside in the alpine house. Outside, it prefers a sheltered woodland position. 30cm.

6 *Paris polyphylla* var. *yunnanensis* f. *alba* An unusual, slow-growing plant with attractive, greenish yellow bracts. Prefers a sheltered woodland postion. 20cm.

7 *Primula bracteata* subsp. *henrici* Often sold as *P. henrici*, this primula hails from Tibet. The pale purple-pink flowers have a distinctive yellow eye.

8 *Paeonia daurica* subsp. *macrophylla* A peony from the Western Caucasus in Georgia. White flowers appear in late spring. Adrian grew this specimen from seed 25 years ago.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ taken him well beyond alpines, from tiny *Androcace* to an enormous *Dahlia imperialis* that towers over the pond halfway down the garden. Beautiful, small steppe irises flower in the scree garden and dwarf conifers cling to miniature cliffs in the rockery, while the peat garden boasts unusual tender trees, such as *Rhodoleia henryi* and *Schefflera macrophylla* from Vietnam.

Another specialist collection can be found in the bulb house near the bottom of the garden, packed with bulbs that need baking-dry conditions over the summer to flower at their best. A further glasshouse is tucked below the entrance drive and devoted to desert plants. The sheer profusion of euphorbias, welwitschias, agaves and other xerophtic plants.

Adrian puts at least part of his success down to "working with each plant to develop the soil and microclimate so that there's no need to use pesticides, fungicides or fertiliser. I also believe that once a bed is prepared there is no need for digging – preserving the soil structure allows the soil's microflora and fauna to thrive. Once the ideal conditions are created, I let nature do the work." His scientific training (he has a doctorate in geology) has also come in handy: he has carried out lots of experiments to see what will grow, and created dozens of microclimates that allow him to cultivate a wide range of plants.

Right The enclosed, upper formal parterre, which steps down from the gravelled drive to the front of the house. The natural spring that feeds the canal running alongside the wall (see facing page) generates other water features, including the small pool on the right and the larger pond towards the bottom of the sloping section of the garden.

Below Natural areas and views over the surrounding countryside provide a counterpoint to the more cultivated parts of the garden.

He also credits climate change for helping to extend the growing season, though he cautions that it "doesn't mean we won't still get occasional hard winters and dry summers, or that we can safely raise truly tender plants outdoors. That said, I've been able to grow things that aren't supposed to be reliably hardy outside London, and one or two that you're not supposed to be able to grow at all in the UK except under glass."

Though the AGS remains his main focus, Adrian's energy and skills have led him in an exciting new direction. He recently joined the board of trustees at nearby Great Dixter, where he is working with head gardener Fergus Garrett on designs for a new garden at Woolbeding House in Sussex. Inspired by the plants found along the ancient Silk Road from China to the Mediterranean, it will come complete with a 'kinetic glasshouse' designed by Heatherwick Studio. Given what Adrian has achieved at Boyton Place, it will surely be worth waiting for. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Adrian's next Alpine Garden Society Kent Show will take place on 20 April at Sutton Valence School, North Street, Sutton Valence, Kent ME17 3HL.
For more information visit **alpinegardensociety.net**

Above One of the grassy areas lower down the garden that Adrian has left to grow semi-wild, with naturalised bulbs and orchids.

Left The narrow canal in the upper formal area is known as the *acequia*, as in the communal irrigation channels found in Spain. Fed from the main spring, it flows continually at a constant temperature and never freezes. The long summer floral season begins with the dark-blue, early flowering *Ceanothus* above it.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Most gardeners know about traditional ways of composting, but head gardener Joshua Sparkes explains the options for smaller spaces

WORDS JOSHUA SPARKES ILLUSTRATION VICKI TURNER

Most of us know about traditional methods of composting using a mixture of leafy greens and woody browns, turned regularly. Composting builds habitats for worms and other beasties and feeds the microbes that live in our soil as well as introducing new ones that break plant material into crumbly organic matter and help unlock and release stored nutrients. It also aids water retention and improves soil structure – the list goes on and on. It can be made in a multitude of ways, limited only by garden space.

Composting also has a greater role to play by enabling us to reduce our landfill waste. Municipal waste has increased by three per cent every year since 1996. Sent to landfill, it releases methane, which contributes to global warming. Landfill is responsible for 22 per cent of the total methane released in the UK alone. Some landfill sites do have methods to catch methane and councils do compost food waste, but this all requires fuel, energy and transportation. As our population grows, it is more important than ever that we all start composting and as more of us live in cities with small or no garden, indoor systems are becoming more relevant.

Bokashi is an indoor fermentation process that allows the recycling of most kitchen waste including meat and dairy products. Originating from Asia (with ties to Korean Natural Farming), it uses organisms to break down the material quickly, negating concerns relating to 'brown to green' ratios, turning and moisture levels. It loses no nutrients and creates a powerful liquid fertilisers for plants. Bokashi is the ideal closed system that can easily be placed in your home.

Another great indoor method is worm composting, using a worm bin placed in a dark area in the house or shed. Worms break down certain kitchen waste, paper and compost to create worm castings, which boast 50 per cent water retention and contain important minerals and nutrients. This makes a rich fertiliser containing growth hormones and natural insect and disease repellents that help build topsoil and prevent damping off in seedlings. One plant requires just one teaspoon of worm compost per season.

Compost communities, where neighbourhoods produce and share home-made compost locally, in gardens and allotments, empower individuals to make a difference on a small scale. In areas of New York, such as Brooklyn and Manhattan, local networks encourage people to learn and share ideas while making friends. Brooklyn Botanics, for example, takes your waste, composts it for you and gives it back. Battery Park in Manhattan helps teach communities to make compost that is then used for local projects. We can all take responsibility for our waste by composting, whether we have space for a compost heap or not. □

FIND OUT MORE

Bokashi Composting by Adam Footer (New Society Publishing, 2014)

Bokashi Direct supplies all you need to start your own Bokashi compost: **bokashidirect.co.uk**

The Urban Worm, a social enterprise advocating worm farming: **theurbanworm.co.uk**

Traditional compost

- Create a circular bin on bare soil to allow a transfer of soil microbes.
- Include greens, such as grass, eggshells and vegetable scraps, for nitrogen, and brown material (carbon), such as straw, plant material and paper. Remember a heap needs oxygen and water.
- Placing a well-rotted log or woodland soil at the base with twigs or brash will introduce further beneficial microbes.
- Stack alternate brown and green layers.
- Water thoroughly if ever the heap gets dry.
- Once full, leave for a year, then turn into another wire bin and leave for another year.

Bokashi

- Buy a Bokashi bin and Bokashi starter to digest waste.
- Add 7-8cm of chopped kitchen waste (even cooked food) followed by a scattering of Bokashi bran. Repeat until full.
- Seal the lid and leave for two weeks. Drain off liquid every two days, dilute one teaspoon with 4.5l of water and apply to plants.
- After two weeks the compost should smell sweet; if it smells 'off' add more bran or discard.
- To use the compost, dig into garden soil two weeks prior to planting. You can also incorporate it into compost heaps or use it to feed a worm composter.

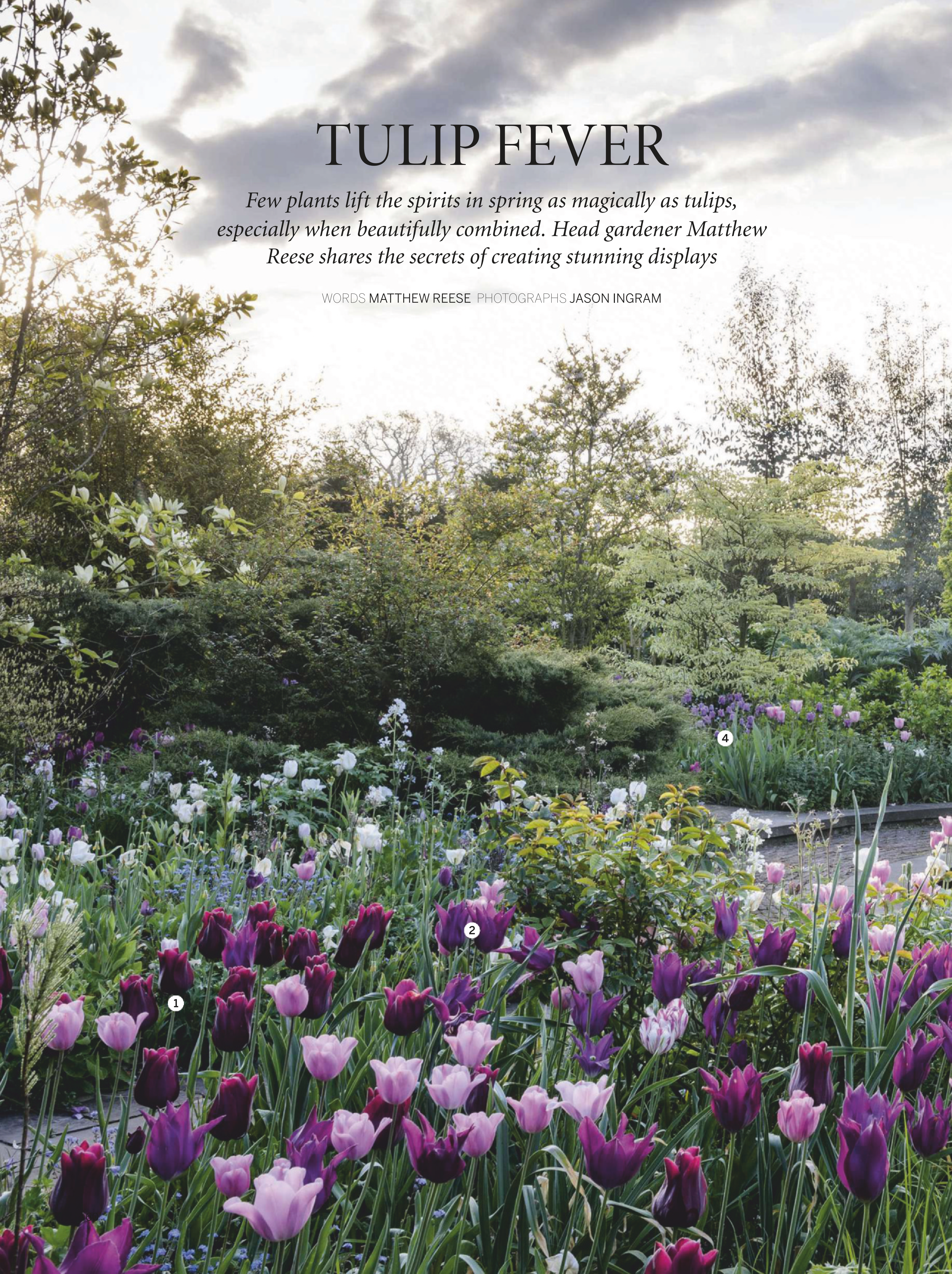
Worm compost

- Place a 10cm layer of shredded newspaper or damp leaves in a worm composting bin. Place tiger worms on top and leave overnight.
- The next day add kitchen scraps or compost to half or quarter the weight of worms.
- Feed the worms with kitchen scraps (never meat, dairy products or acidic food) once or twice a week, adding a third by volume of paper or cardboard.
- Store in a cool dark area, elevated off the ground or placed in a tray to catch excess moisture, and leave for six months.
- To harvest, create small mounds in the castings under a bright light (to drive the worms down). Collect the top portion, wait and repeat until only worms are left.
- Place castings directly on to plants or into planting holes, add to compost or use as a compost tea or insect repellent.

TULIP FEVER

Few plants lift the spirits in spring as magically as tulips, especially when beautifully combined. Head gardener Matthew Reese shares the secrets of creating stunning displays

WORDS MATTHEW REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

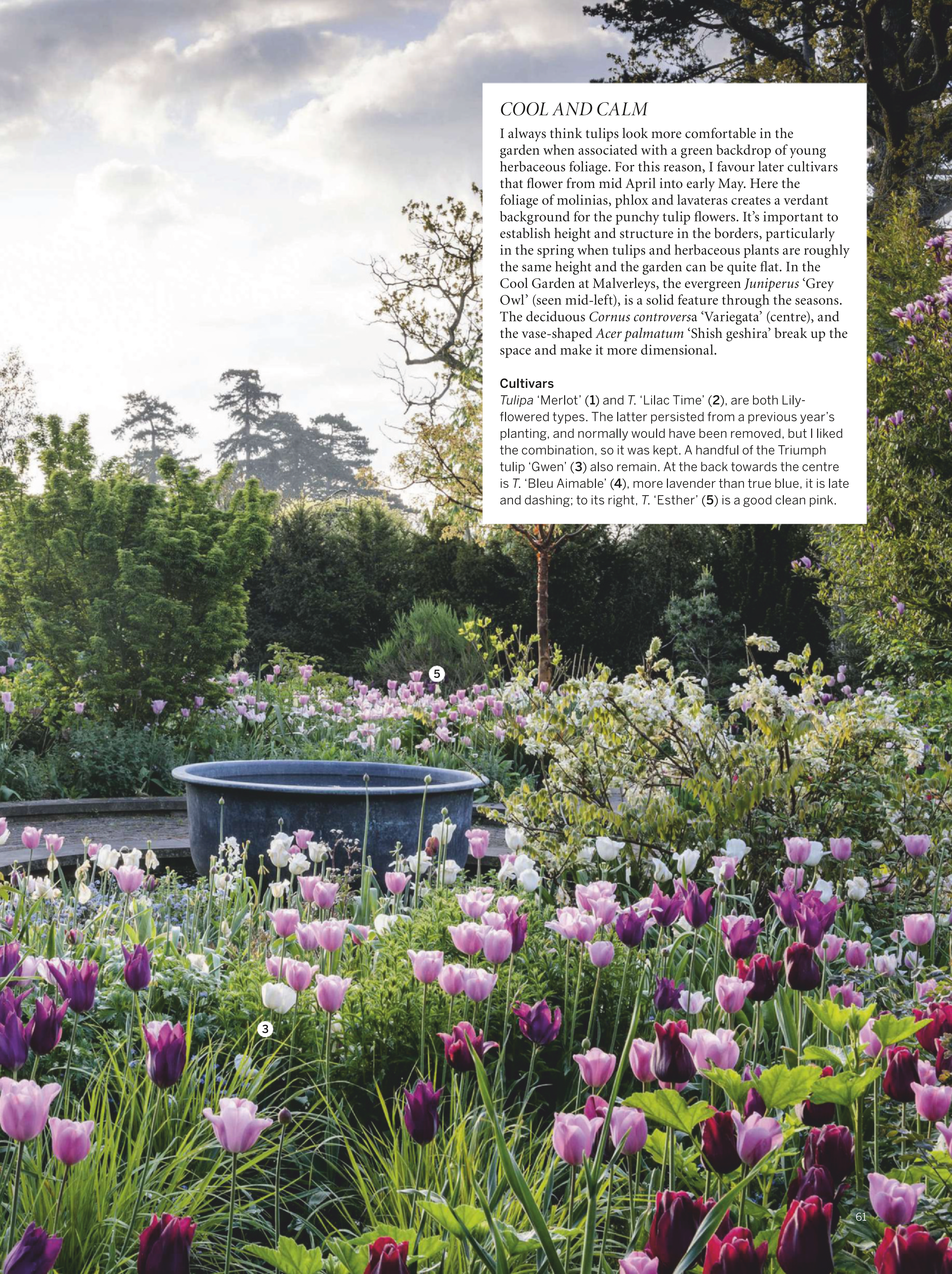


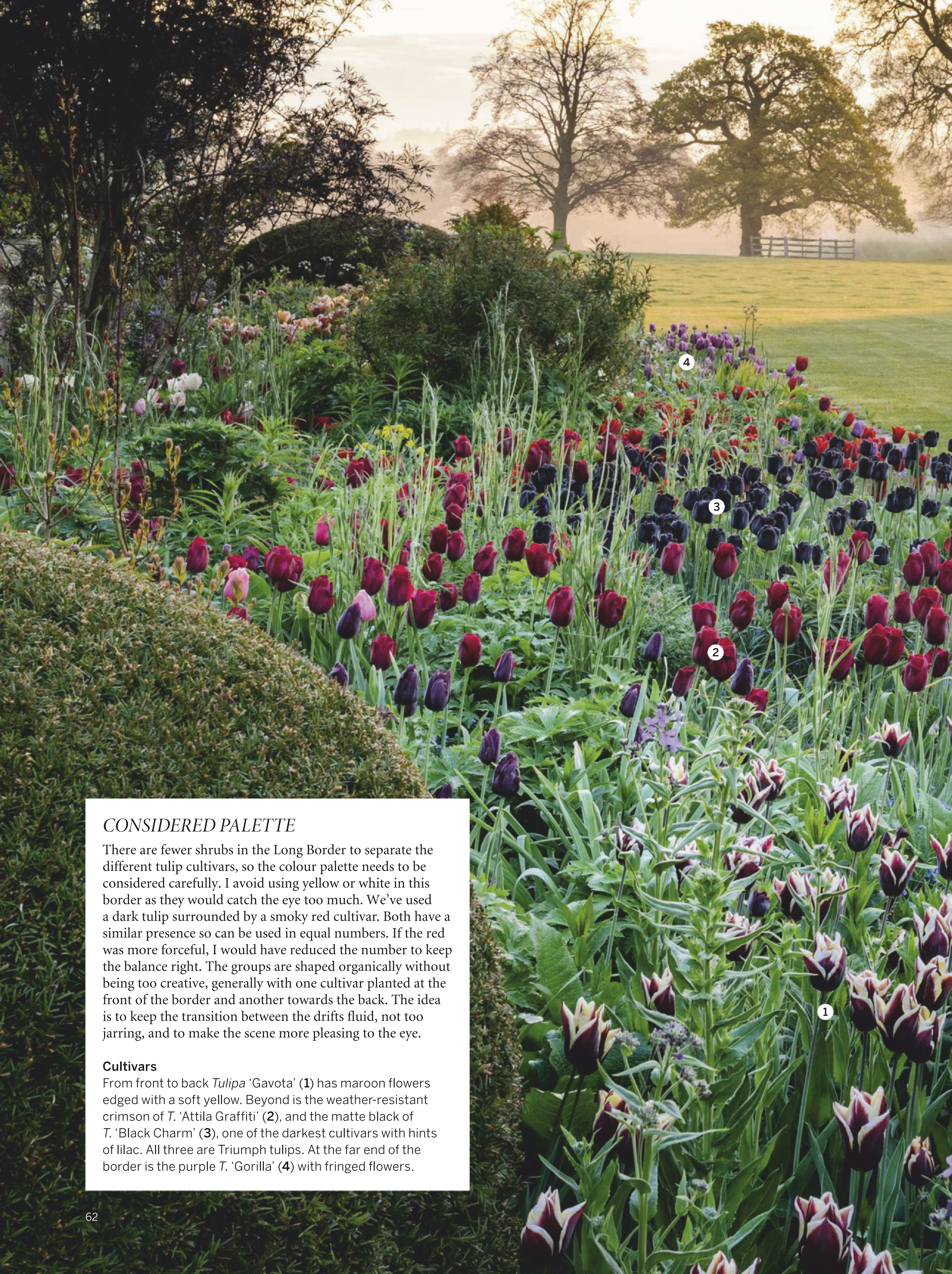
COOL AND CALM

I always think tulips look more comfortable in the garden when associated with a green backdrop of young herbaceous foliage. For this reason, I favour later cultivars that flower from mid April into early May. Here the foliage of molinias, phlox and lavateras creates a verdant background for the punchy tulip flowers. It's important to establish height and structure in the borders, particularly in the spring when tulips and herbaceous plants are roughly the same height and the garden can be quite flat. In the Cool Garden at Malverleys, the evergreen *Juniperus* 'Grey Owl' (seen mid-left), is a solid feature through the seasons. The deciduous *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' (centre), and the vase-shaped *Acer palmatum* 'Shish geshira' break up the space and make it more dimensional.

Cultivars

Tulipa 'Merlot' (**1**) and *T.* 'Lilac Time' (**2**), are both Lily-flowered types. The latter persisted from a previous year's planting, and normally would have been removed, but I liked the combination, so it was kept. A handful of the Triumph tulip 'Gwen' (**3**) also remain. At the back towards the centre is *T.* 'Bleu Aimable' (**4**), more lavender than true blue, it is late and dashing; to its right, *T.* 'Esther' (**5**) is a good clean pink.



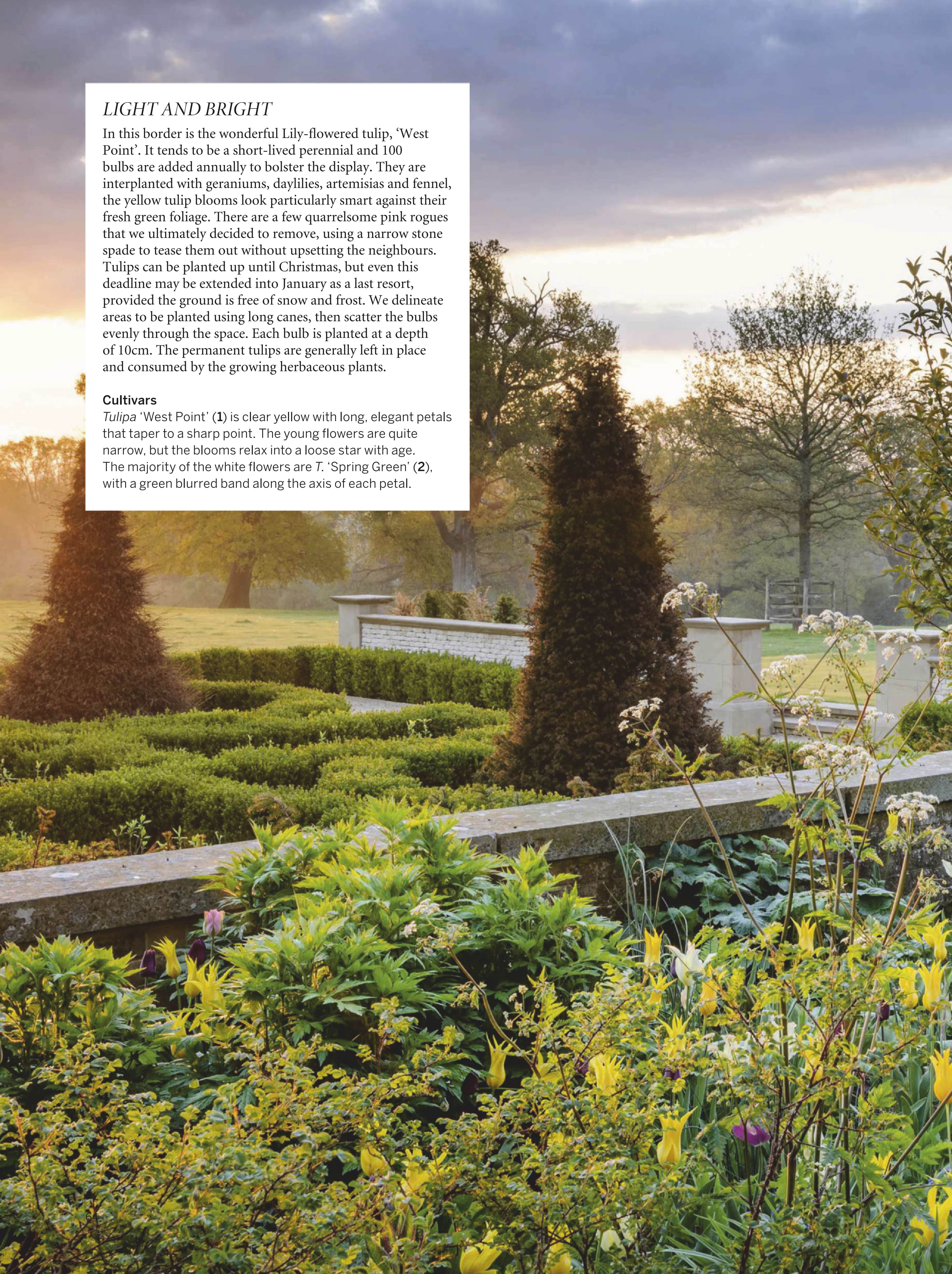


CONSIDERED PALETTE

There are fewer shrubs in the Long Border to separate the different tulip cultivars, so the colour palette needs to be considered carefully. I avoid using yellow or white in this border as they would catch the eye too much. We've used a dark tulip surrounded by a smoky red cultivar. Both have a similar presence so can be used in equal numbers. If the red was more forceful, I would have reduced the number to keep the balance right. The groups are shaped organically without being too creative, generally with one cultivar planted at the front of the border and another towards the back. The idea is to keep the transition between the drifts fluid, not too jarring, and to make the scene more pleasing to the eye.

Cultivars

From front to back *Tulipa* 'Gavota' (**1**) has maroon flowers edged with a soft yellow. Beyond is the weather-resistant crimson of *T.* 'Attila Graffiti' (**2**), and the matte black of *T.* 'Black Charm' (**3**), one of the darkest cultivars with hints of lilac. All three are Triumph tulips. At the far end of the border is the purple *T.* 'Gorilla' (**4**) with fringed flowers.



LIGHT AND BRIGHT

In this border is the wonderful Lily-flowered tulip, 'West Point'. It tends to be a short-lived perennial and 100 bulbs are added annually to bolster the display. They are interplanted with geraniums, daylilies, artemisias and fennel, the yellow tulip blooms look particularly smart against their fresh green foliage. There are a few quarrelsome pink rogues that we ultimately decided to remove, using a narrow stone spade to tease them out without upsetting the neighbours. Tulips can be planted up until Christmas, but even this deadline may be extended into January as a last resort, provided the ground is free of snow and frost. We delineate areas to be planted using long canes, then scatter the bulbs evenly through the space. Each bulb is planted at a depth of 10cm. The permanent tulips are generally left in place and consumed by the growing herbaceous plants.

Cultivars

Tulipa 'West Point' (**1**) is clear yellow with long, elegant petals that taper to a sharp point. The young flowers are quite narrow, but the blooms relax into a loose star with age. The majority of the white flowers are *T.* 'Spring Green' (**2**), with a green blurred band along the axis of each petal.

1
2

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

NICOLA SPENCE

The UK's chief plant health officer on fighting bacterial plant diseases, developing crops in remote African farming communities, and being inspired by the botanist David Bellamy

WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

If your picture of a typical botanist is of a man with a grubby cardigan and compost lodged under his fingernails, you are going to be sorely disappointed when you meet the UK's chief plant health officer and deputy director for plant and bee health at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Nicola Spence carries her extremely long job title and distinguished career very lightly as she sparkles with eloquent enthusiasm for her job. The job in question is one of the most important in the country: it is she who spearheads the battle – and it is a battle – against the expanding repertoire of tree and plant diseases that are attacking our gardens, our landscapes and our countryside. She guides governments, nurtures scientists and advises the gardener.

The journey to becoming chief plant health officer began, as so many horticultural careers begin, with her grandparents' garden. "My grandfather was a serious plantsman," she explains, "and I used to potter around with him. I had a lot of awareness of plants even then: my father was in the Royal Air Force and one of his postings was in London so a visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, became a regular Sunday outing." She attended The Mount School in York (alma mater of actor Dame Judi Dench and astrophysicist Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell) where she developed this appetite for science and in particular botany. "I started doing biology but soon dumped the zoology bit and concentrated on plants at Durham University where one of my tutors was David Bellamy: we all thought he was a bit bonkers but his excitement was infectious as he dragged us off to examine algae in Upper Teesdale." She developed a conviction that there was nothing in the world as important as plants.

> MY FIRST PROJECT INVOLVED BEING OUT IN THE FIELD IN ALL WEATHERS, WORKING ON WHITE ROT IN ONIONS

From there she went off to work in marine biology in Bermuda – she is an advanced diver, although nowadays her aquatic energies are mostly directed at bodyboarding in Cornwall. Next was a master's degree in microbiology at Birkbeck in London, followed by a job at the National Vegetable Research Station at the Wellesbourne campus, University of Warwick. At the time there was a lot of research into crops, such as wheat, but not much work being done on vegetables – the area where most people come into closest contact with plants. "My first project was working on white rot in onions. I was out in the field in all weathers while some of my colleagues were doing things with microscopes in a nice warm room, but it was a great first stab at plant pathology." From onions, she moved on to bean viruses in Africa (which led to her completing a PhD in plant virology at the University of Birmingham). She travelled through the continent "stuck in the back of a Land Rover on bad roads (plenty of roadblocks and guns) visiting farmers whose main source of protein was beans. The secret was understanding how people lived and working with them to develop new varieties which grew well and tasted good."

She spent 15 years working with development agencies on real problems that affected people's lives at the same time as doing projects with the horticultural industry back at home. "Viruses are everywhere. I worked on lots of projects, including investigating viruses affecting tomatoes, *Alstroemeria* and Surfinia petunias." A lot of what virologists do is detective work. Using a range of forensic tools, they dismantle the virus piece by piece: microscopic examinations, molecular dissections, inoculations and DNA sequencing. However, all good things must come to an end and she finally hung up her lab coat and moved into a more administrative role managing people and resources, and liaising with government and the industry.

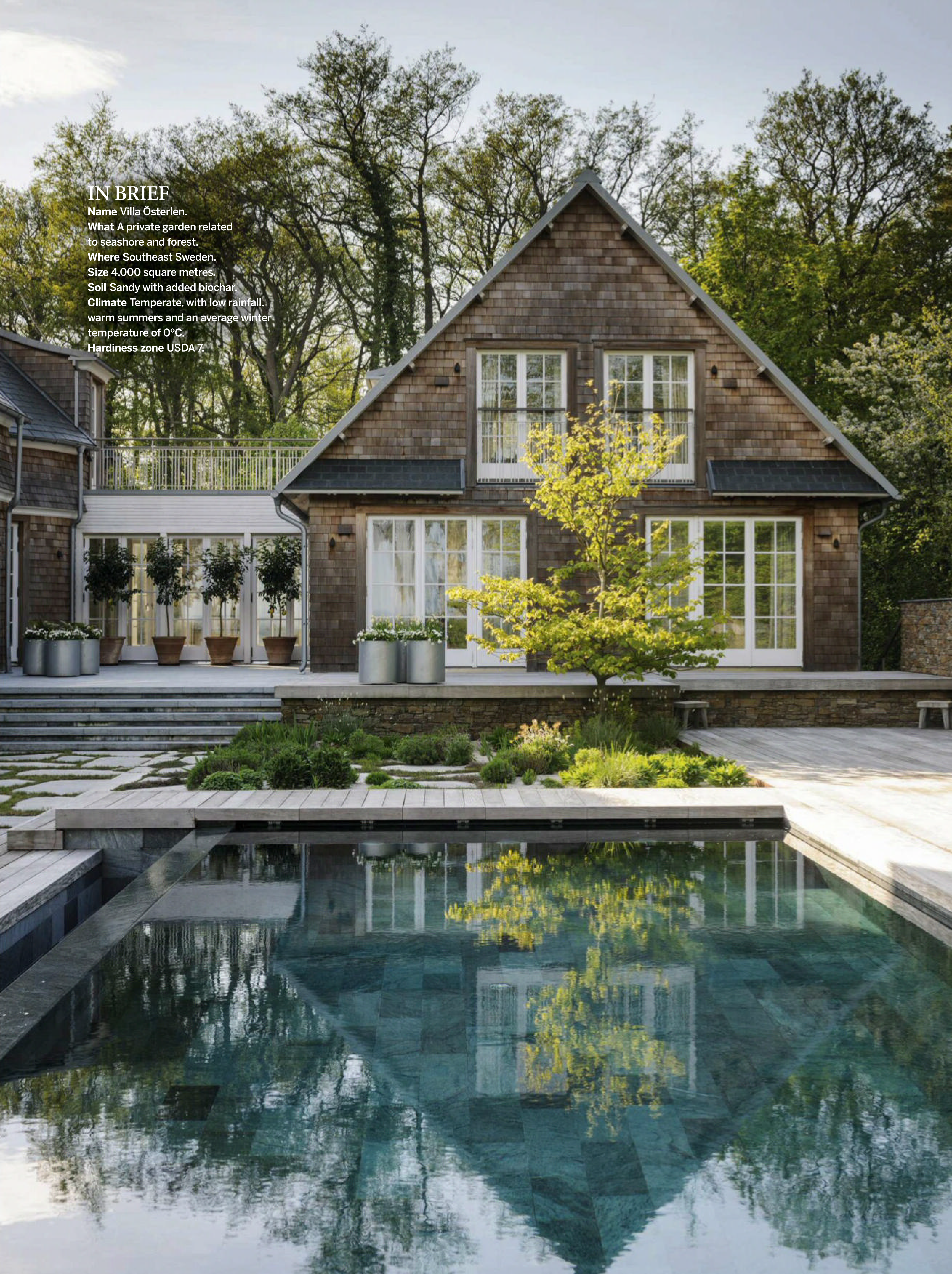
"I applied for this particular job in the wake of the ash dieback crisis as I recognised that something had gone wrong. The position of chief plant health officer was a new one. Previously all plant problems had been dealt with by the chief veterinary officer, but with this post they were after someone who was part scientist, part diplomat. Fortunately, I like a challenge." Today it is not just the ash that is under threat, but the horse chestnut and oak too. *Xylella* (possibly the biggest threat we have ever faced) is just around the corner. "We are living at a time of the perfect storm: global movement of plants and climate change together. Our trees are meeting pests that they have never faced before."

She sees trouble everywhere: "I see plants in the background on television and see the disease." Nobody should underestimate the struggle that lies ahead of us: it is vitally important that gardeners only buy things from reputable nurseries and never fall for a cheap plant from the back of a van. Nicola Spence may not look like the stereotypical botanist, but I can think of no one better suited to lead us into battle. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

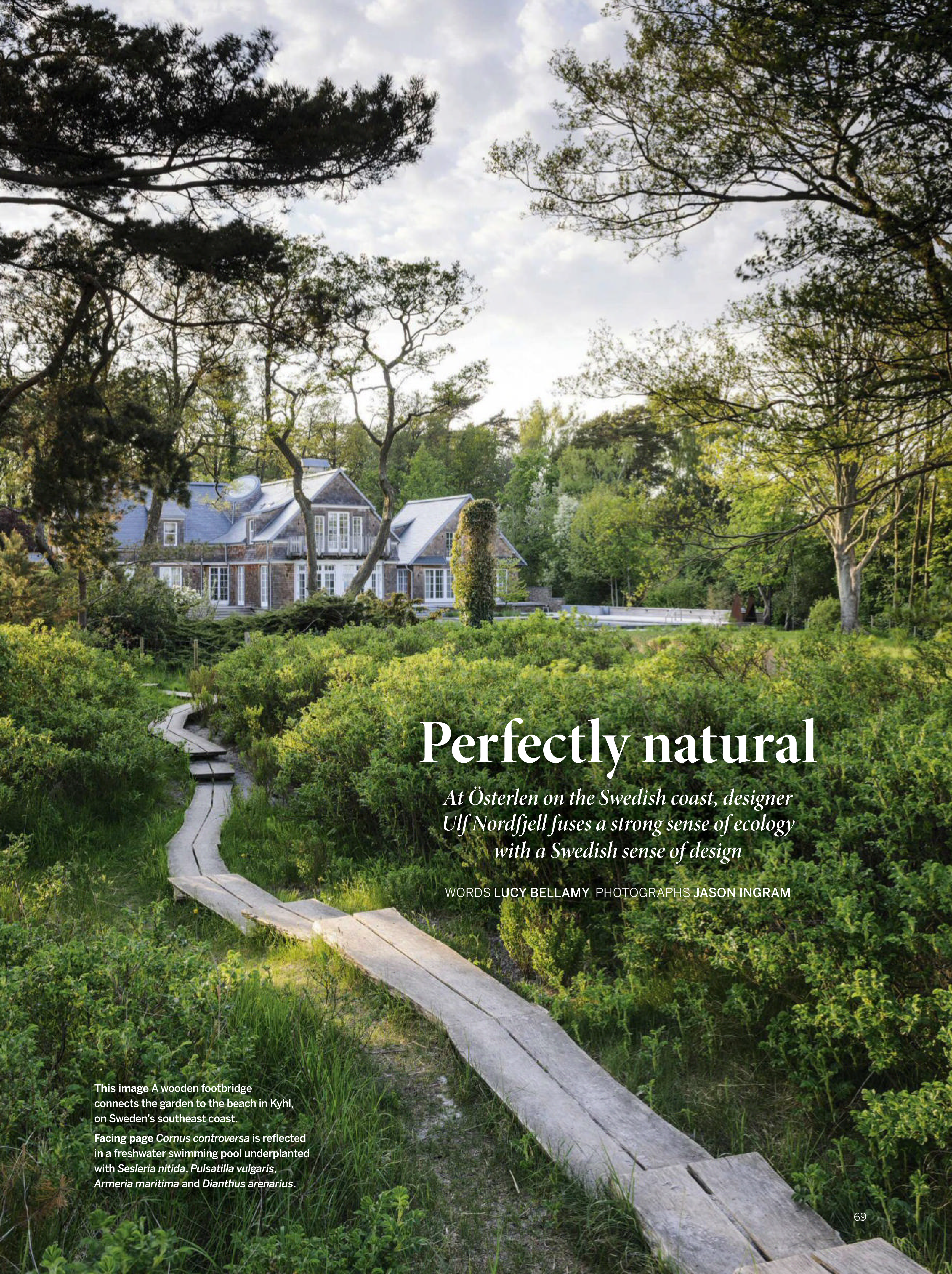
Plant health and biosecurity are being showcased in the Resilience Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in May.

NEXT MONTH Michael Marriott, rosarian with David Austin Roses.



IN BRIEF

Name Villa Österlen.
What A private garden related to seashore and forest.
Where Southeast Sweden.
Size 4,000 square metres.
Soil Sandy with added biochar.
Climate Temperate, with low rainfall, warm summers and an average winter temperature of 0ºC.
Hardiness zone USDA 7.



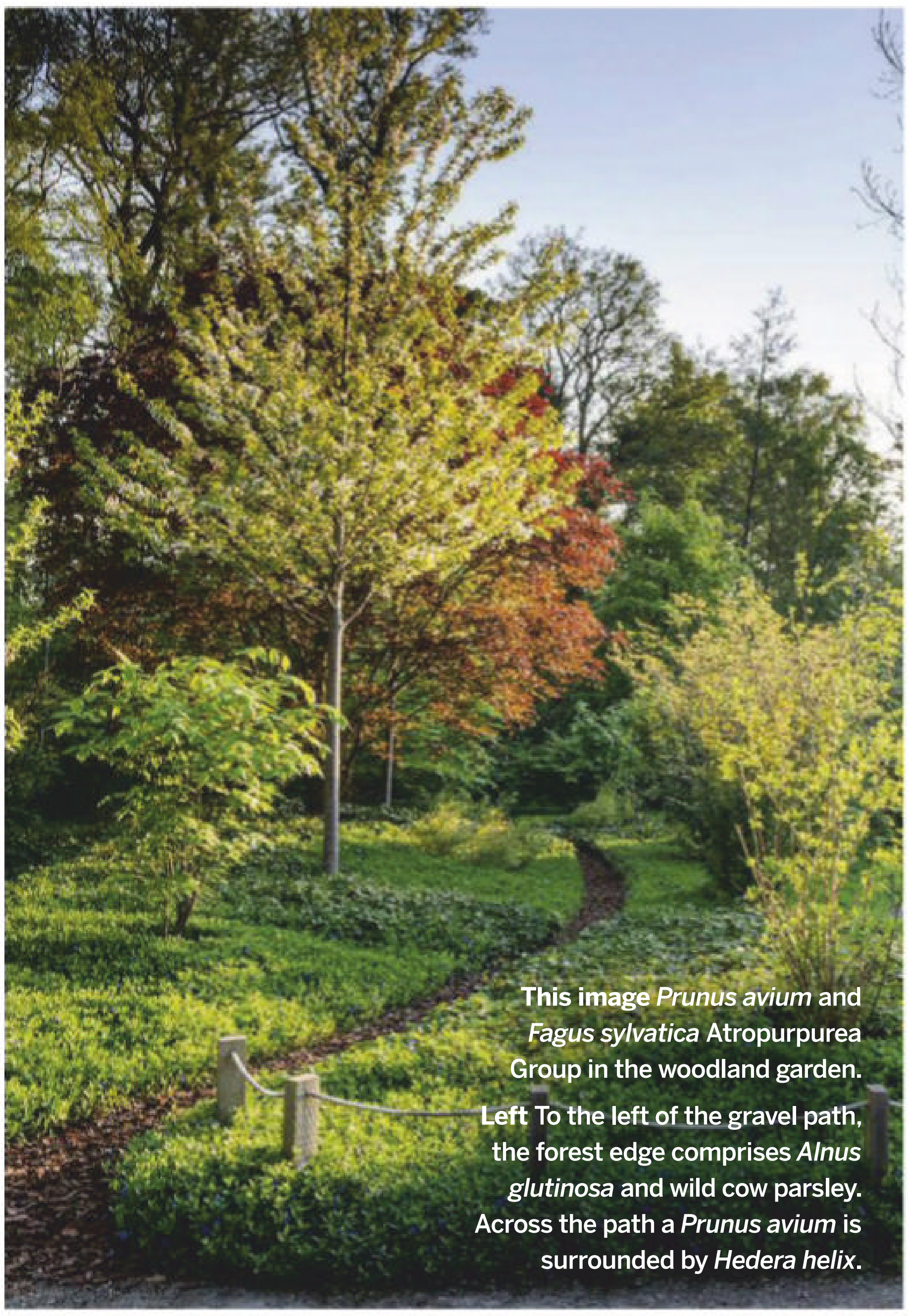
Perfectly natural

At Österlen on the Swedish coast, designer Ulf Nordfjell fuses a strong sense of ecology with a Swedish sense of design

WORDS **LUCY BELLAMY** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

This image A wooden footbridge connects the garden to the beach in Kyhl, on Sweden's southeast coast.

Facing page *Cornus controversa* is reflected in a freshwater swimming pool underplanted with *Sesleria nitida*, *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Armeria maritima* and *Dianthus arenarius*.



This image *Prunus avium* and *Fagus sylvatica* Atropurpurea Group in the woodland garden.

Left To the left of the gravel path, the forest edge comprises *Alnus glutinosa* and wild cow parsley. Across the path a *Prunus avium* is surrounded by *Hedera helix*.

Osterlen in Kyhl is a garden on the southeastern coast of Sweden on the Baltic Sea. It enjoys the very best of Sweden's climate, although it can be windy due to its coastal location. And while many gardens take their cue from the wider landscape, Österlen is more than this. The garden is positioned between a closed, dark forest and the wide open sea, and designed 'in the tracks of nature'.

A small creek running through the alder forest that leads to the garden from the road creates the perfect biotope for *Alnus glutinosa* to thrive. The creek links the forest to the Baltic Sea, following the line of the garden and crossing one of the finest beaches in Sweden – the nature reserve of Sandhammaren – where white sand dunes are stabilised by grasses and pine trees, leading to the open sea.

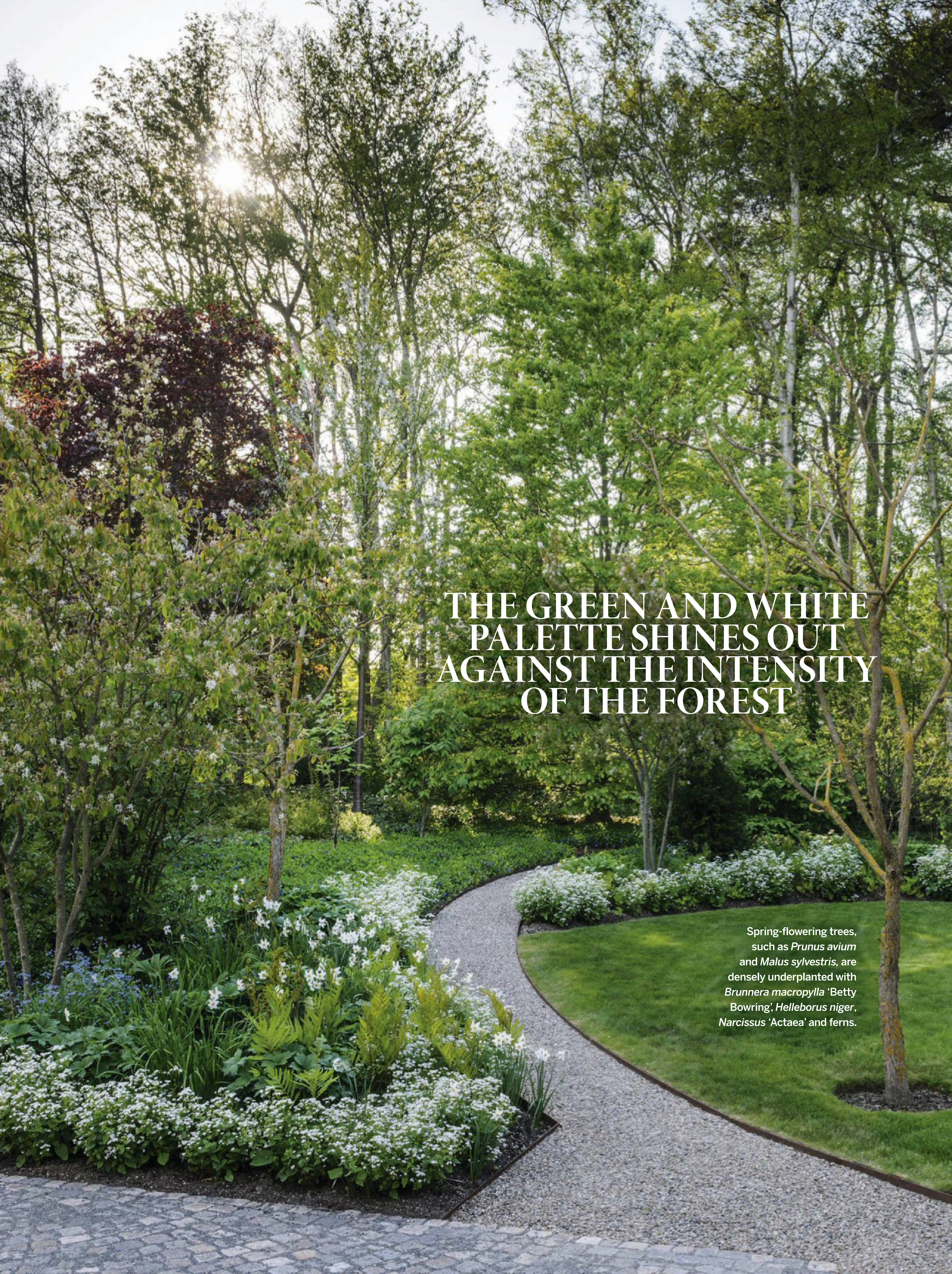
The garden, designed by Ulf Nordfjell, can be split into four main areas that wrap around a newly built house: at the front, a woodland garden with spring-flowering bulbs scattered among *Prunus avium*, *Malus sylvestris* and alder spared from the forest, and, on the beach side, a beautifully planted spring garden with freshwater pool edging a lawn, a meadow with naturalised native plants and a *Miscanthus* 'field'. Ulf would add to these the forest at front of the house and the beach beyond, to make six areas in total. They are as much part of the garden at Österlen as everything else.

Swedish garden design pairs a strong sense of composition with ecological thinking. Commissioned to design Österlen six years ago, Ulf's first task was to create a forest garden at the front of the house. Following the felling of several of the huge alders in the boundary forest in a storm shortly after he was asked to design the garden, Ulf set about reinstating the forest edge within the garden using a mixture of common natives and some cultivated plants that extend the spring and winter flowering seasons. A medley of ferns, including *Onoclea sensibilis* (the sensitive fern) and *Osmunda regalis* (the royal fern), grow cheek by jowl with *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Betty Bowring', *Helleborus niger* and *Narcissus* 'Actaea' under a canopy of spring-flowering trees. The plants are densely packed and cover every centimetre of soil. Their colour palette of greens and whites – Ulf's horticultural signature – shines out in contrast to the darkness of the forest, fresh, verdant and bright.

The topography of the soil in this part of the garden has also been changed, using shapes inspired by the sand dunes beyond, to create a physical space between the cultivated garden and the forest. "In Sweden there are public areas and private areas but also something else in between," says Ulf. This marks that spot. Raising the soil above groundwater level has also helped the new planting here to thrive.

Around the back of the house, on the beach side, is a succession of planting that becomes increasingly wild as it nears the sea. Stepped down from the house, a delicately planted spring-flowering terrace contains *Tulipa linifolia* Batalinii Group 'Bright Gem', *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Armeria maritima* (the white form), *Dianthus arenarius*, *Sesleria nitida* and *Iris germanica*, placed directly into beds of sand. The planting here is spacious – sparse even – and beautifully ▷

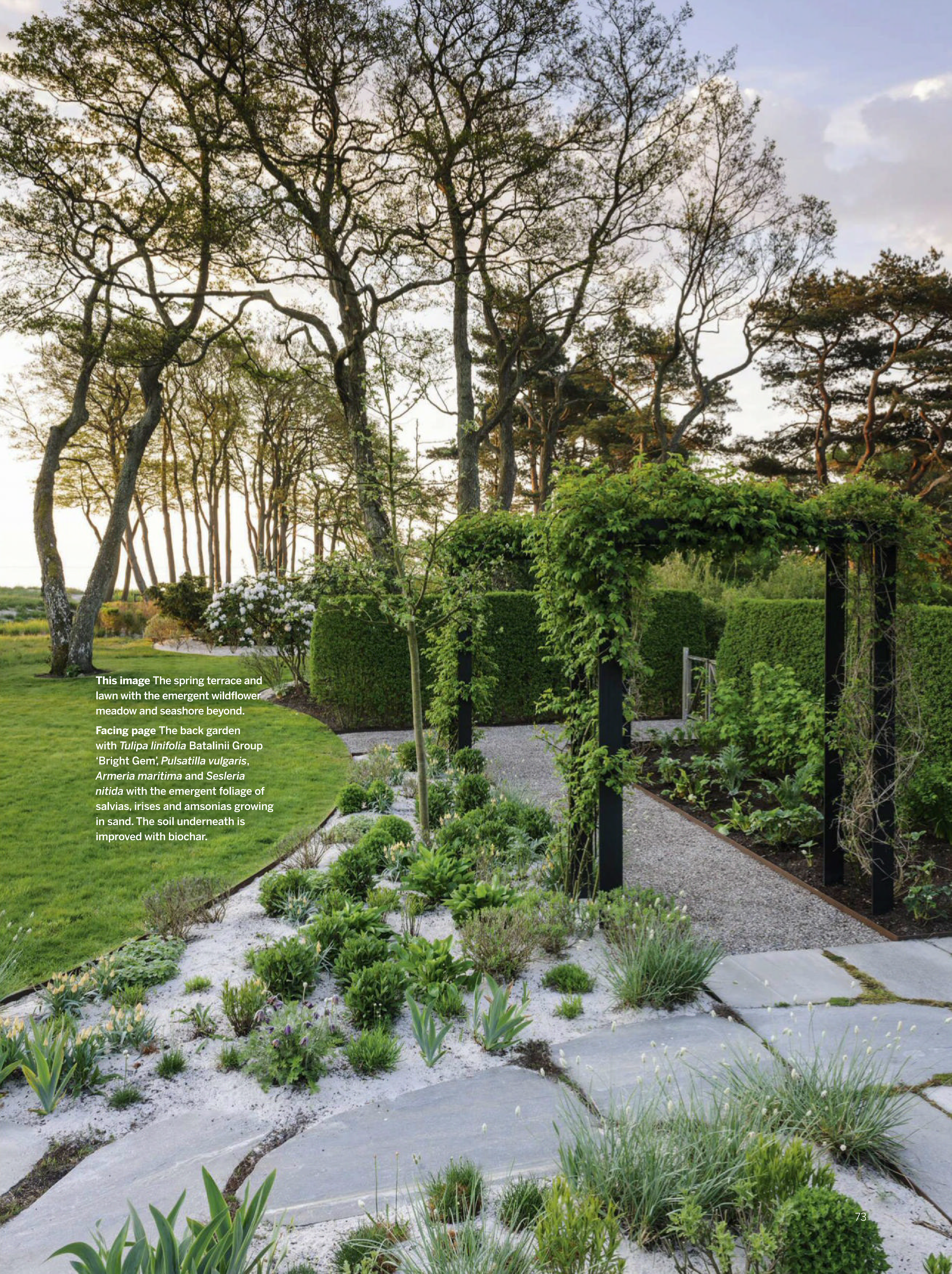
To continue turn to page 74



THE GREEN AND WHITE PALETTE SHINES OUT AGAINST THE INTENSITY OF THE FOREST

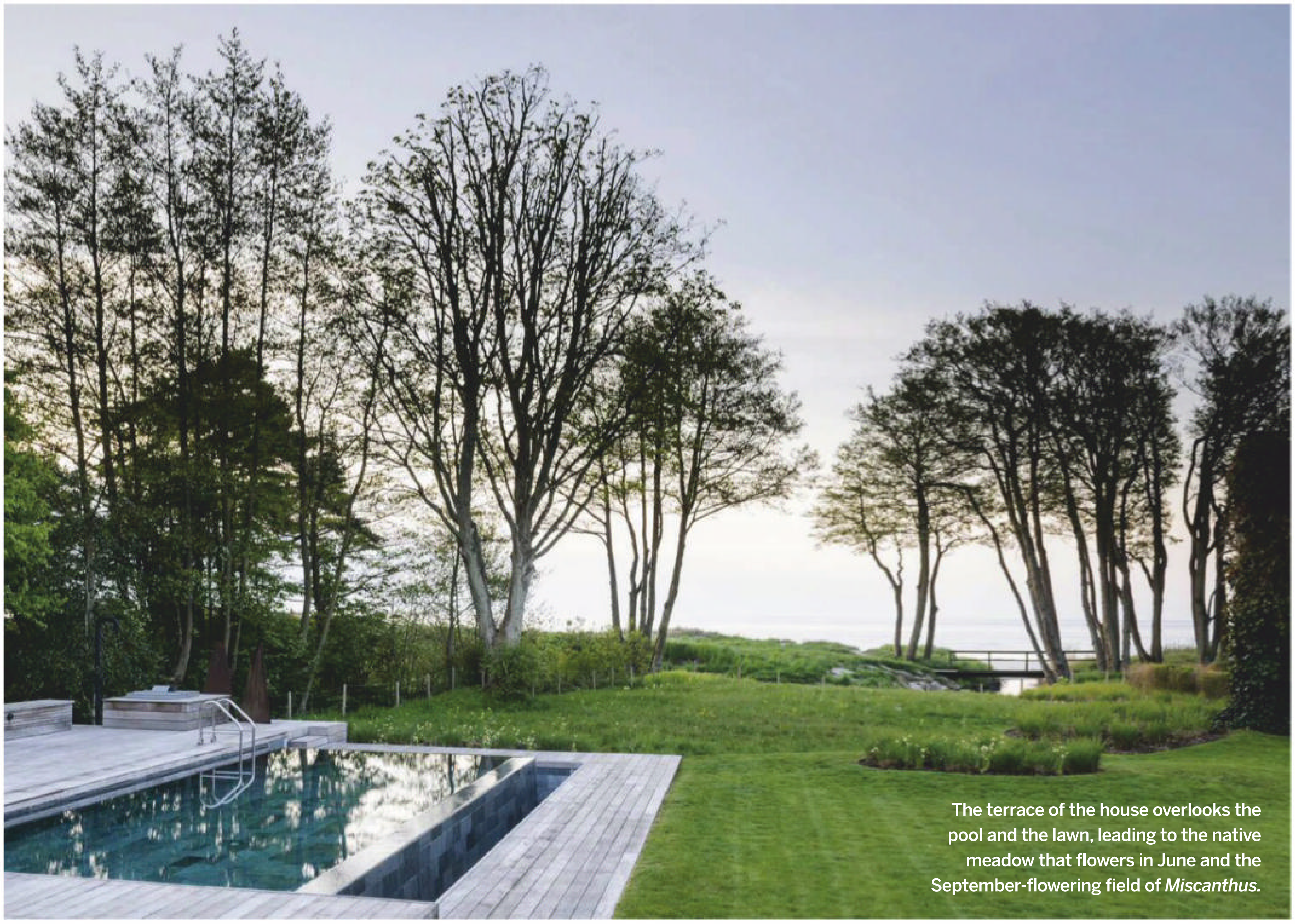
Spring-flowering trees, such as *Prunus avium* and *Malus sylvestris*, are densely underplanted with *Brunnera macropylla* 'Betty Bowring', *Helleborus niger*, *Narcissus* 'Actaea' and ferns.

SPARSE PLANTING ON THE TERRACE ALLOWS LIGHT TO ACCENTUATE THE SHAPES AND COLOURS OF SPRING



This image The spring terrace and lawn with the emergent wildflower meadow and seashore beyond.

Facing page The back garden with *Tulipa linifolia* Batalinii Group 'Bright Gem', *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, *Armeria maritima* and *Sesleria nitida* with the emergent foliage of salvias, irises and amsonias growing in sand. The soil underneath is improved with biochar.



The terrace of the house overlooks the pool and the lawn, leading to the native meadow that flowers in June and the September-flowering field of *Miscanthus*.

▷ so, allowing the light to infiltrate and highlight the shapes and colours of the early flowers, picking out the fuzzy blush of the *Pulsatilla* and the tiny, white *Sesleria* heads and making the brilliant yellow of the tulips glow. The sand layer on the beds creates a warmer site and prevents the plants from sitting in freezing water during Sweden's harsh winters. It also makes maintenance straightforward and hints at the seashore beyond.

At the edge of this planting is a sunken pool for swimming. Taking a dip here must be like swimming wild in a Nordic lake, all open skies, trees and light. On the days when the pool isn't in use a *Cornus controversa* is reflected on the surface, its architectural shape tipping the balance between the wild and the made. Beyond the pool is a lawn that extends to a naturalised meadow using native plants such as *Primula veris* (the common cowslip), *Campanula rotundifolia* (the common harebell or bluebell), the pasqueflower *Pulsatilla vulgaris* and *Scabiosa columbaria* (small scabious) that grow in longer grass.

A swathe of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Fontäne', beyond this flowers in late summer. It provides a pocket of privacy when it grows tall and is the final step before the garden rejoins the public areas at the shore.

Österlen is an arc of a garden, with an increasingly wild gradient, spanning forest to sea via woodland edge, terrace, fresh water, meadow, pine forest and beach. The tracks of nature indeed. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Ulf's work at **nordfjellcollection.se**

WORKING WITH NATURE

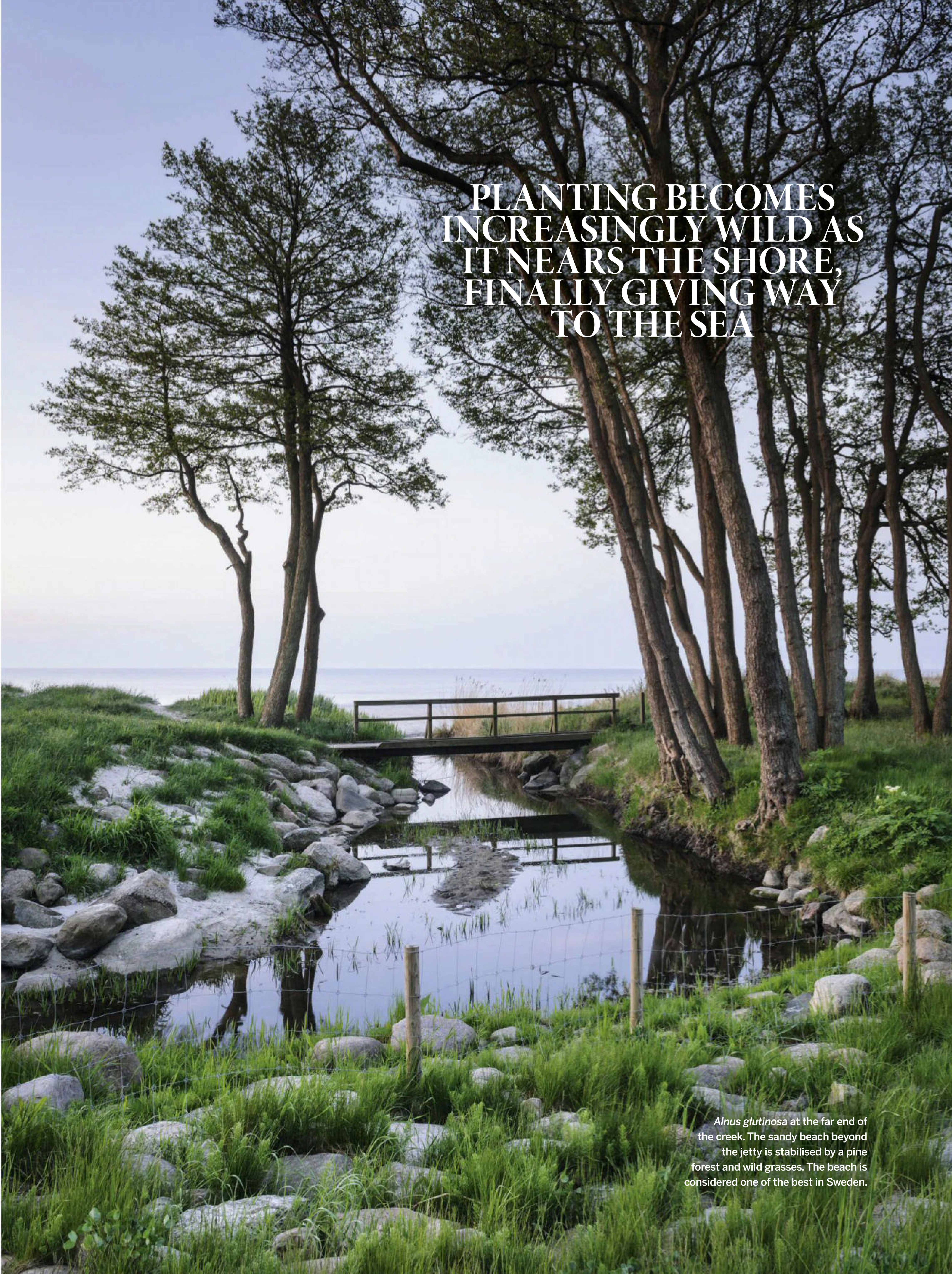
The trees at Österlen are thinned by arborists but retain their natural habit.

Opening the woodland canopy on the approach to the garden allows the wind to travel through it. Prior to this several of the larger trees were felled by storms.

Pruning rejuvenates older trees and stimulates new growth.

At Österlen Ulf worked with an arborist to reshape the established trees at the forest edge and in the beach forest.

An open canopy also allows daylight to penetrate, creating the opportunity for a more diverse planting in the understorey.



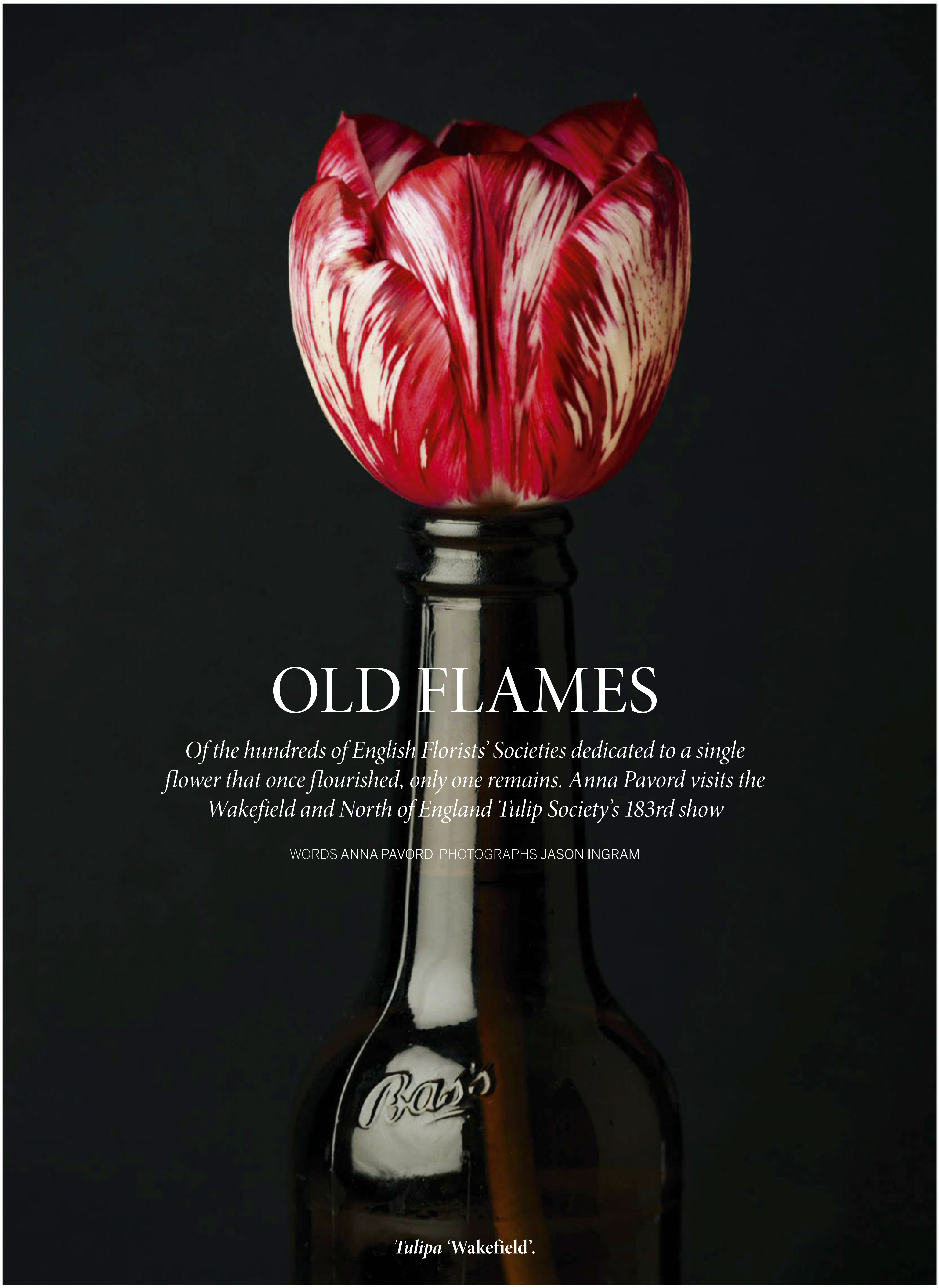
PLANTING BECOMES INCREASINGLY WILD AS IT NEARS THE SHORE, FINALLY GIVING WAY TO THE SEA

Alnus glutinosa at the far end of the creek. The sandy beach beyond the jetty is stabilised by a pine forest and wild grasses. The beach is considered one of the best in Sweden.

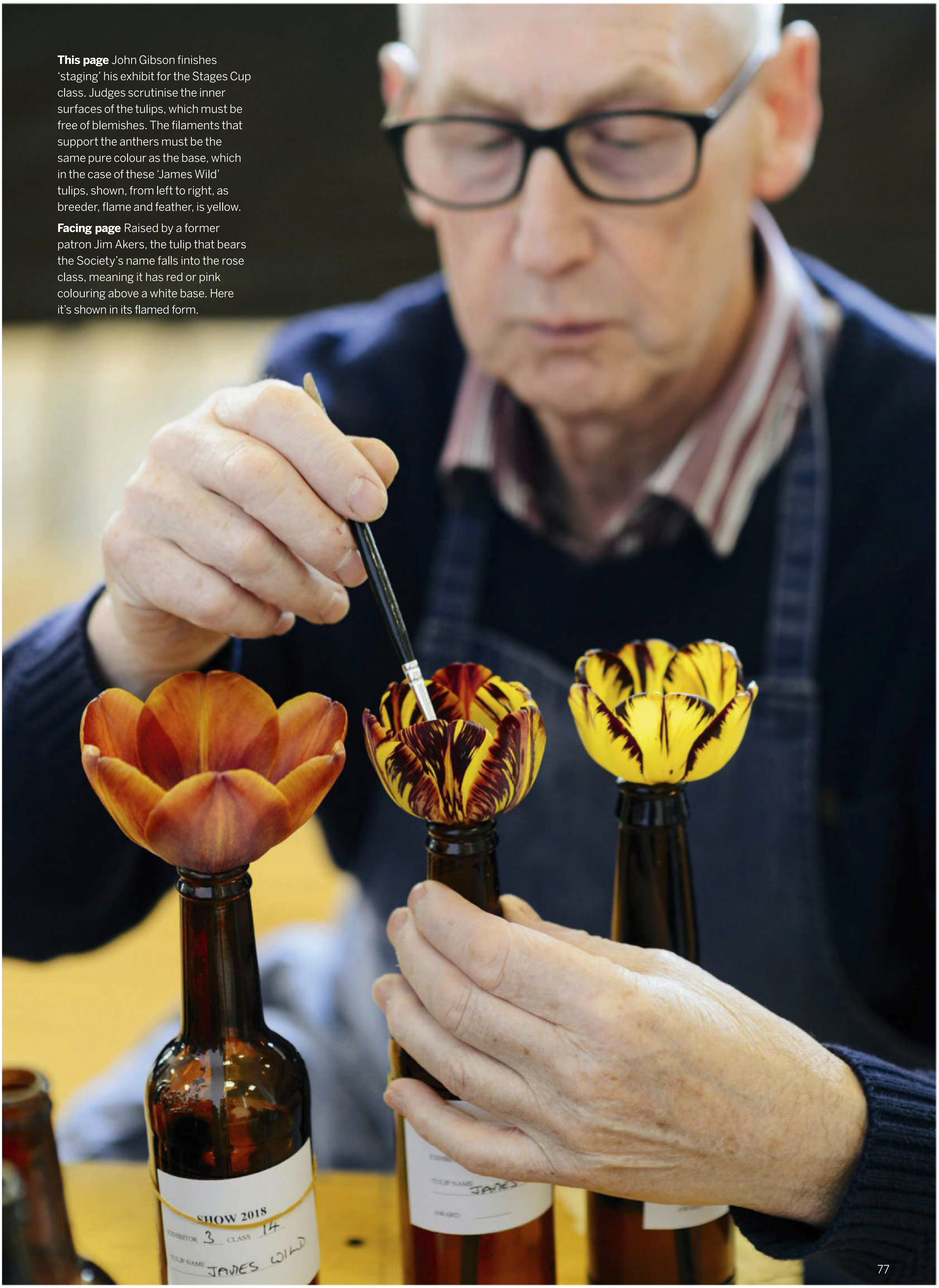
OLD FLAMES

Of the hundreds of English Florists' Societies dedicated to a single flower that once flourished, only one remains. Anna Pavord visits the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society's 183rd show

WORDS ANNA PAVORD PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



***Tulipa* 'Wakefield'.**



SHOW 2018
EXHIBITOR 3 CLASS 14
TULIP NAME JAMES WILD
TULIP NAME JAMES
AWARD

This page John Gibson finishes 'staging' his exhibit for the Stages Cup class. Judges scrutinise the inner surfaces of the tulips, which must be free of blemishes. The filaments that support the anthers must be the same pure colour as the base, which in the case of these 'James Wild' tulips, shown, from left to right, as breeder, flame and feather, is yellow.

Facing page Raised by a former patron Jim Akers, the tulip that bears the Society's name falls into the rose class, meaning it has red or pink colouring above a white base. Here it's shown in its flamed form.

There was a time when almost every town of importance in the north of England had its own tulip society. In Ashton-under-Lyne, florists met at Mr Cock's aptly named Botanical Tavern. Stockport tulip lovers congregated at the Golden Ball and Florist Hotel in Millgate. Tulip growers of Leeds met at Mr William Dobbing's establishment, the Golden Cock Inn at Kirkgate. Members of the Halifax tulip society favoured the Shoulder of Mutton Inn. But of the hundreds of tulip societies that once flourished, only the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society in Yorkshire now remains.

On 11 May, the Society will be holding its 184th show in Horbury, on the outskirts of Wakefield. The blooms you'll see there are no ordinary tulips. In the petals of the exquisite, rare tulips exhibited in competition by members of the Society, runs the blood of flowers first grown by John Evelyn and John Rea in the middle of the 17th century. These are the feathered and flamed beauties known as English Florists' tulips. You can't buy them in any catalogue, nor will you ever find a display to equal the one staged each year here in Yorkshire.

All who compete for prizes at the Wakefield show would describe themselves as florists, using the word in its original 17th-century sense: people who devote themselves single-mindedly to the culture of a particular flower, who develop it by their own breeding to conform to a tightly laid down set of rules and who enjoy showing their blooms in competitions that, in the past, were viciously contested. Only certain flowers were admired and cultivated by the florists. Anemones, carnations, ranunculus and tulips were their first loves. Then auriculas, hyacinths, pinks and polyanthus were added to the list.

From the beginning (tulips have been grown in this country since 1577), English Florists' tulips have been divided into three different categories – bybloemens, roses and bizarres – and are still shown at Wakefield under these ancient names. A bybloemen has a white base and petals that are mauve or purple. A rose also has a white base, but its petals are pink or red. Bizarres have yellow bases, with yellow petals that can be marked with red, brown or black (or as near black as a tulip can get).

> FROM THE BEGINNING, ENGLISH FLORISTS' TULIPS HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO THREE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

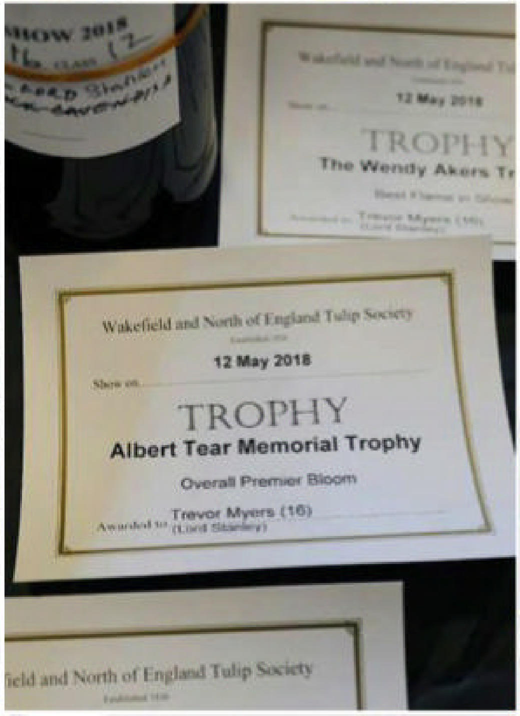
Each of these three types can be shown in three different forms. If plain, the tulips are called 'breeders', and the petals are all one colour, unmarked. If a breeder has been infected by the tulip breaking virus, spread by aphids, the plain colour breaks up into a pattern of contrasting colours. Not all of these 'breaks' are valuable in English Florists' terms, only flowers that are properly 'feathered' or 'flamed'. A feathered flower is etched round the edge of each petal with a series of fine lines in a contrasting colour, which must be well defined and consistent. A flamed flower has a stripe or 'beam' of contrasting colour, which runs up the back of the petal, following the petal's natural spine. From the beam, fine lines branch out like veins to join with the feathering at the edges. The precise placing of the feathers and flames is one important criterion of a good tulip. Wakefield judges also look at the shape of the flower, which should be as close to a half tennis ball as possible. The petals need to be almost as wide as they are high, neither flipping out at the top (in the manner of a Lily-flowered tulip) nor hooking in to close off the top of the cup. The third important attribute is purity. The base of the flower must be clear and not muddied by any other colour. The anthers must be boldly black and the petals rich and strong.

Tulips at the Wakefield show are still staged in the traditional way in brown beer bottles. When most societies had their headquarters in pubs, the practice was both logical and prudent: free heat, free light and free containers. Now shows are held in the sober surroundings of a local community centre, but the florists still hang on to their bottles. They are right. Nothing could better set off these gorgeously complex, finely textured blooms than the utilitarian containers of plain brown glass.

Change comes slow in the Wakefield Society, but it has nevertheless happened. When I first used to make the journey up north to hear the Wakefield show classes 'called' in the old way and watch the ▷

Facing page

Top row John Gibson uses a soft brush to remove pollen and other blemishes from a breeder tulip; John's display of three stages of *T*. 'James Wild' won second prize in the Stages Cup; trophies and cups for more than 30 prizes are displayed, while in the background, judges examine the competing tulips. **Second row** English Florists' tulips awaiting judging in the Silver Challenge Cup are displayed in beer bottles; the prize card for the premier bloom in the show; a vase of three Dutch 'Dordogne' tulips won first prize for member Jenny Cochrane. **Third row** Society secretary Teresa Clements won a third prize for her vase of nine *T.* 'Toyota'; Teresa (centre) proudly holds her two trophies, to her right is Trevor Myers who won the overall prize for premier bloom for his feathered *T*. 'Lord Stanley', while on her left is 15-year-old Alice Green one of the youngest competitors and the fourth generation of the Eyre family to grow and show tulips; a bybloemen flamed tulip. **Bottom row** A heavily marked bizarre flamed tulip; Society member David Day with one of his prize-winning 'Juliet' breeder tulips; a selection of breeder tulips waiting to be cleaned up.



Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society

12 May 2018

Show on

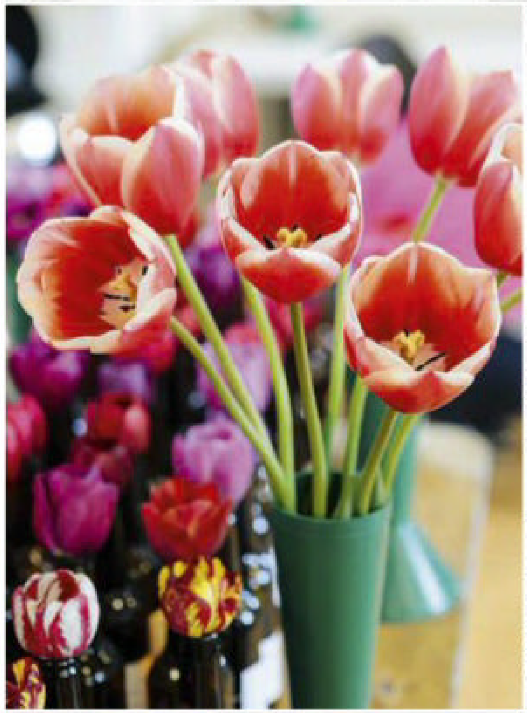
TROPHY

Albert Tear Memorial Trophy

Overall Premier Bloom

Awarded to Trevor Myers (16)
(Lord Stanley)

SHOW 2018
CLASS 12
12 May 2018
TROPHY
The Wendy Akers Tr
ield and North of England Tulip Society



competitors bring out their flowers for judging, nearly all the growers were men. Now women regularly win top prizes. At the 2018 show, the hard-working secretary of the Society, Teresa Clements, won one of the most prized awards, the Eyre Family Trophy. This is given for a display of 12 breeder tulips, all of which have to be different. The florists' tulips are not easy to grow and to be able to produce a vase like this is an incredible achievement.

Among the tulips she showed was the yellow bizarre, 'Sam Barlow', first raised around 1860 by a railwayman called Tom Storer and named after one of the most famous tulip growers of the time. She also included the soft rose pink tulip 'Juliet', raised by William Willison of Whitby around 1845. "These are tulips that just demand your attention," says Teresa. "They have an incredible quality. Each one is a living antique. They are irresistible."

The Eyre family have been prominent (and prize-winning) members of the Wakefield Society for three generations. So have the Akers, whose name has been engraved on many of the Society's trophies. Jim Akers' name first appears on the Needham Memorial Cup (the premier prize) in 1952, his son James Akers' on the same cup in 1983, his grand-daughter, Sarah's in 1999. The Needham Cup is awarded in the most difficult class: a set of 12 'broken' blooms. Only the most experienced growers, with a great many flowers to choose from, can expect to do well here, and Sarah started showing when she was eight.

It was 'broken' flowers, feathered and flamed in contrasting colours that drove the well-known 17th-century epidemic of tulipomania in the Netherlands. Plain-coloured tulips, even in those days, could be cheaply bought. But nobody then understood how a plain-coloured tulip planted in autumn could come up the following spring changed into a hugely valuable 'broken' one. The answer did not come until 1927 when Dorothy Cayley of the John Innes Horticultural Society discovered that the 'breaks' were caused by a virus, spread by aphids.

A flower once broken, stays broken and in a good year, a mature bulb will produce offsets, each of which will have the same characteristics as the mother. That is why members of the Wakefield Society can still show 'Juliet' and 'Mabel' first introduced in the 1840s. New flowers are occasionally introduced into the rarified company of the English Florist's Tulip. Around 1992, a local member, John Wainwright, raised a beautiful rose breeder which he called 'Judy Baker'. Judy was a brilliant grower who won many prizes at Wakefield. The tulip has been equally successful, winning awards recently both as Premier Breeder and Premier Feather.

> THESE TULIPS HAVE AN INCREDIBLE QUALITY. EACH ONE IS A LIVING ANTIQUE. THEY ARE IRRESISTIBLE

There was once a Royal National Tulip Society but it folded in 1936, having never achieved its objective: to overcome the northern florists' natural assumption they could grow better tulips than anyone south of Watford. Of course they could. And they alone have kept faith with this gorgeous but fickle flower. Reports on the annual show have appeared in the *Wakefield Journal* since 1843, when on 29 May, after exhibiting their tulips 'Members dined sumptuously' at the Royal Oak Inn, Wrengate, near Wakefield.

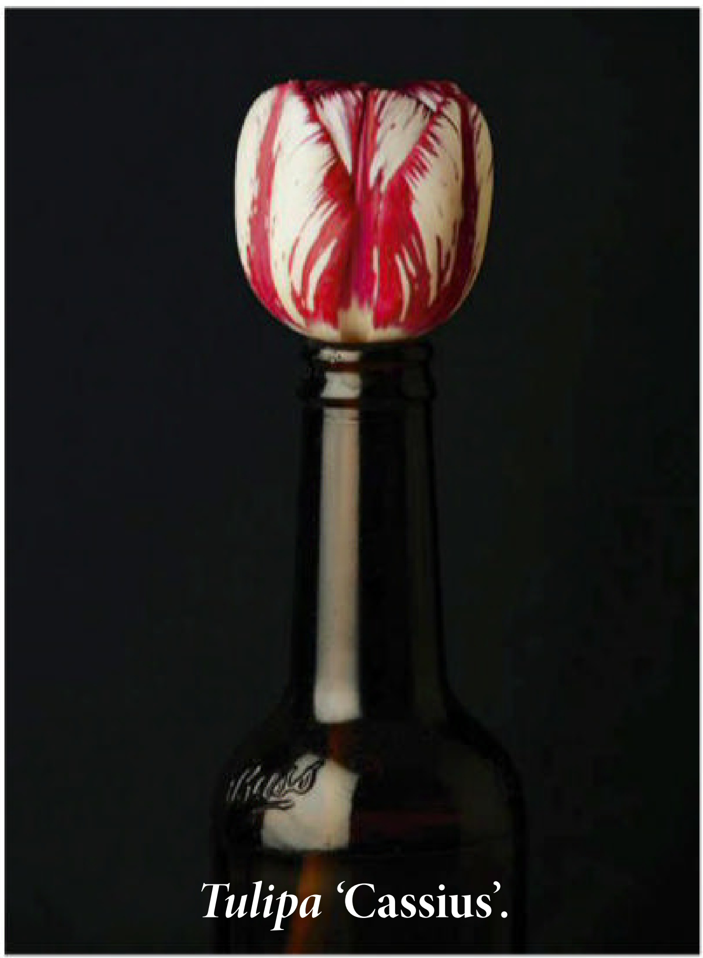
James Akers, now 81, was brought up among beds of English Florists tulips, and won his first gold medal when he was just nine years old. Over the years he has done a great deal of research into the history of this remarkable society and this work forged ahead in 2011 when the committee received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to create an archive. This extraordinary collection – photos, paintings, sound recordings, letters, newspaper cuttings – is now lodged at the Borthwick Institute for Archives in York. It is thanks to the growers of Wakefield, and to them alone, that these phenomenal tulips have survived. Let us give thanks for that miracle. □

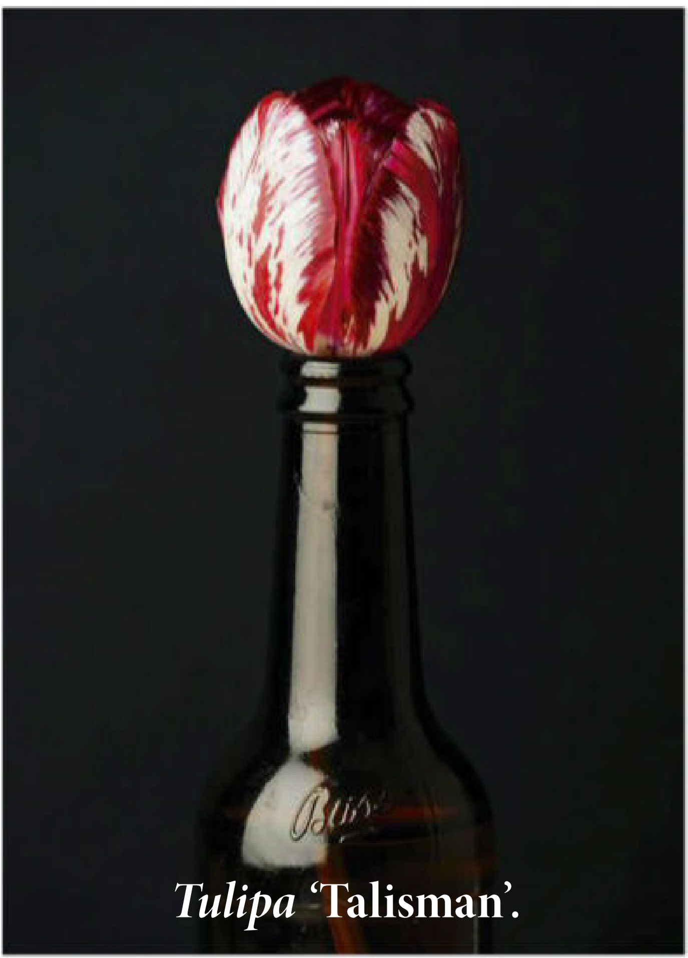
USEFUL INFORMATION

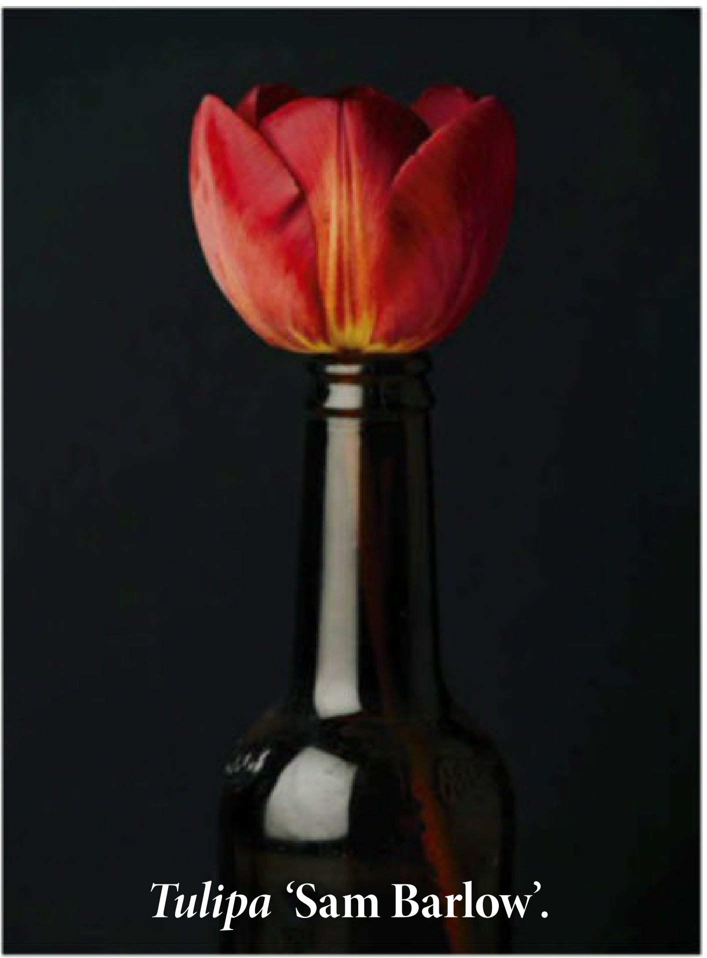
The Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society's 184th Annual Show will be held on Saturday 11 May 2019 at Primrose Hall, Green Park Avenue, Horbury, Wakefield, Yorkshire WF4 6EG. Open 2.30-4.30pm. For a full history of the Society, read *Flames and Feathers* available for £10 from secretary@tulipsociety.co.uk

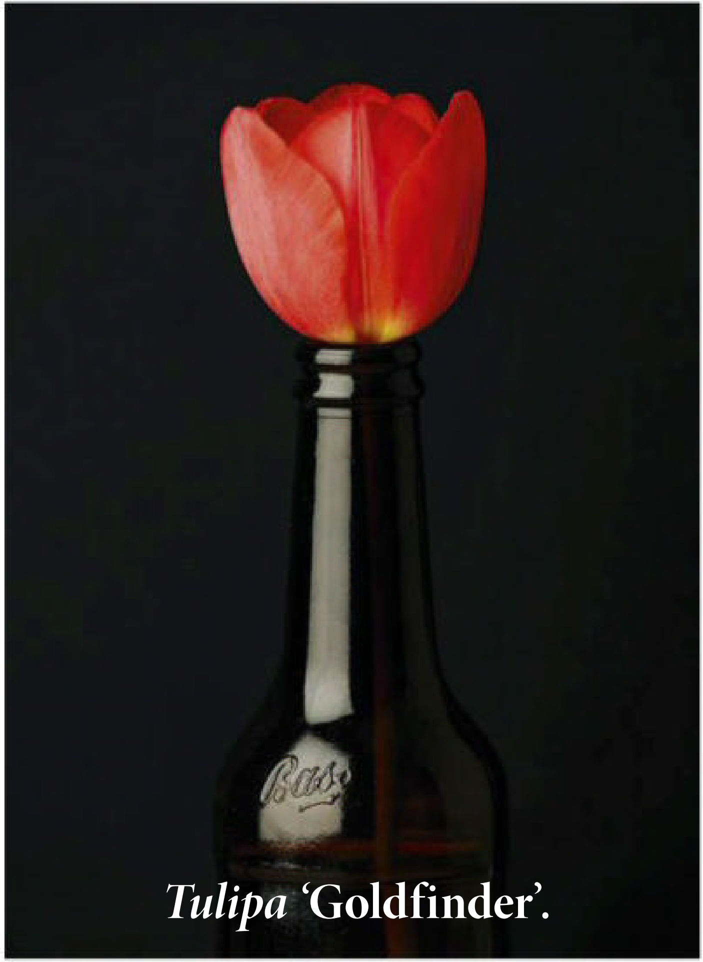
Facing page

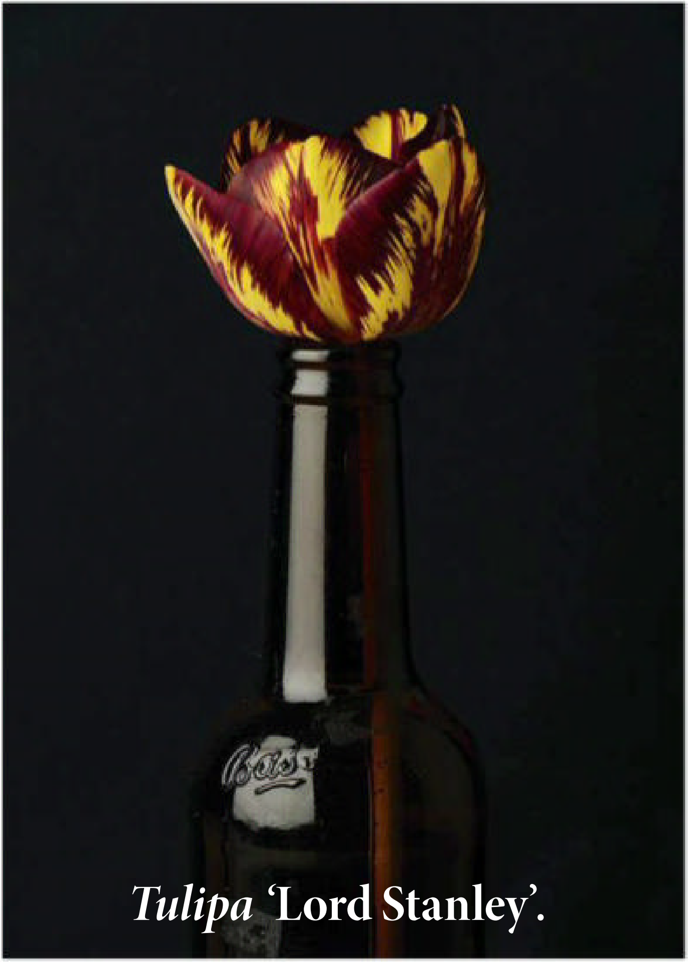
Top row English Florists' tulips, from left to right: a feathered *T.* 'Cassius', a flamed *T.* 'Talisman', and a breeder *T*. 'Sam Barlow' that won first prize for Teresa Clements in the new Best 'Sam Barlow' category. The double-handled trophy for this prize (which you can see Teresa holding on the previous page) was donated to the Society by a distant relative of Sam Barlow and is named in memory of Charles Turner, a 19th-century nurseryman dubbed the king of florists. Engraved on the cup are the names of prize-winning florists who had received it in the 19th century, including one Sam Barlow. **Second row** A breeder *T.* 'Goldfinder', a flamed *T*. 'Lord Stanley', grown by Trevor Myers, which was Overall Premier Bloom at the 2018 show, and a breeder *T*. 'Airy'. **Third row** A feathered *T.* 'Mabel', a flamed *T.* 'Solis' and a feathered *T.* 'James Wild', another prize winner for Trevor Myers.

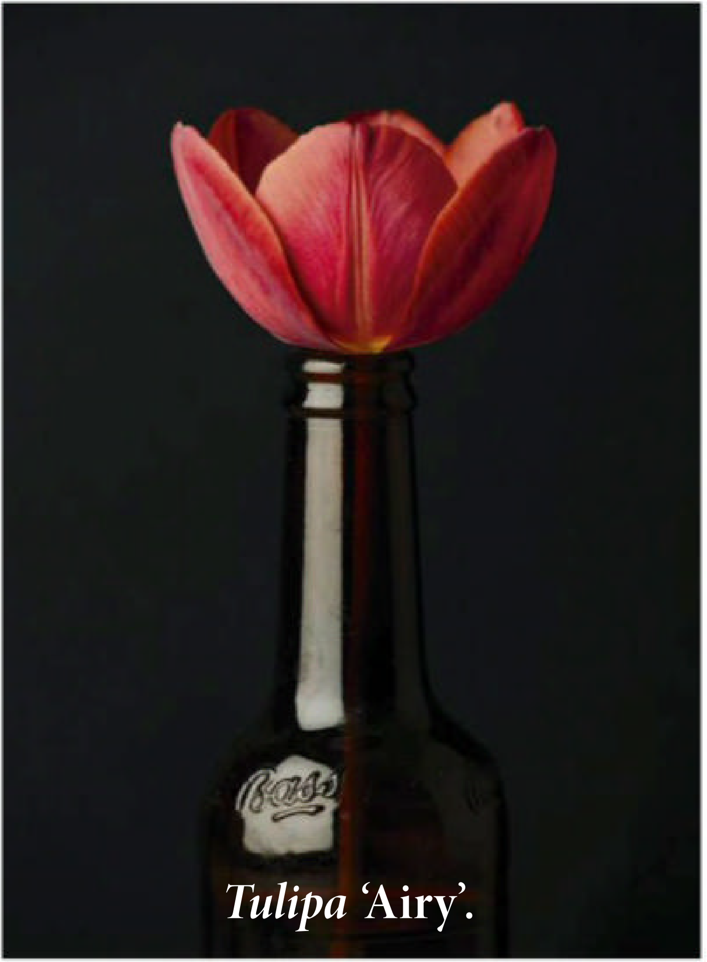

Tulipa 'Cassius'.

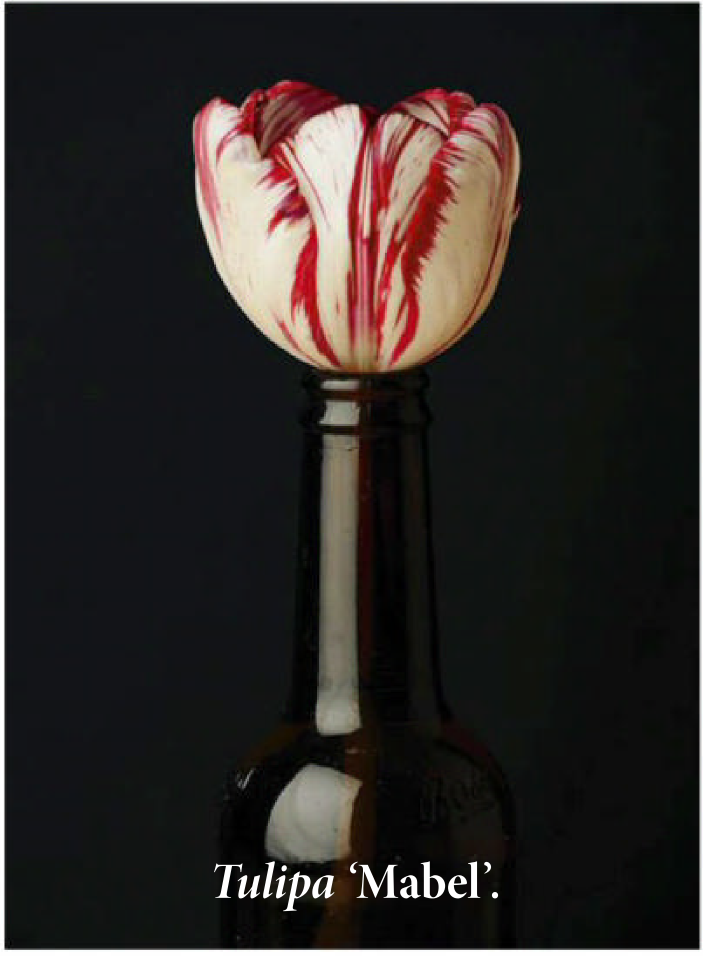

Tulipa 'Talisman'.

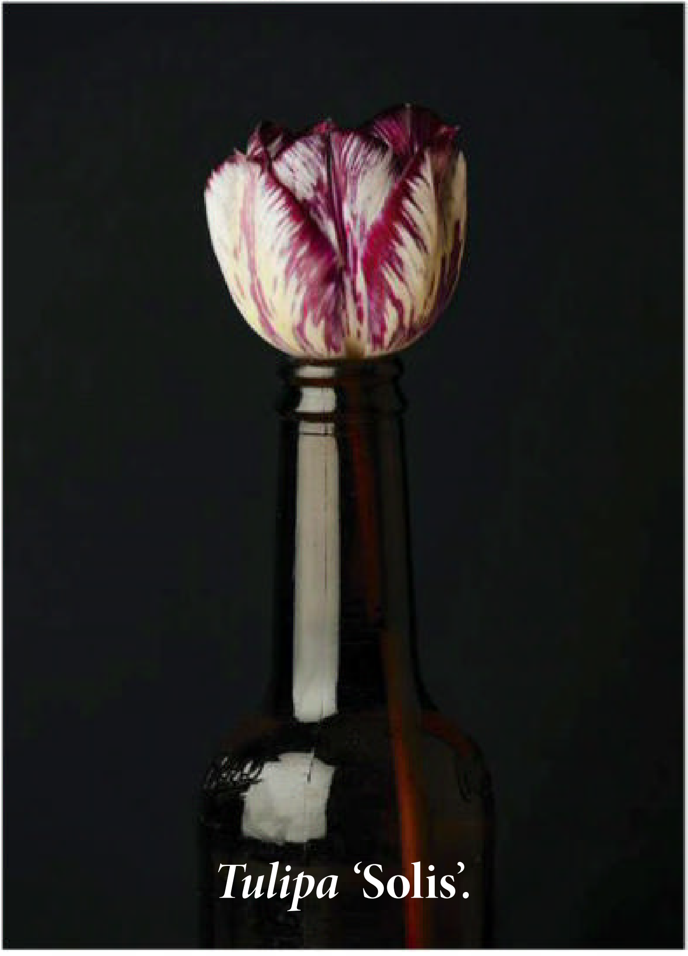

Tulipa 'Sam Barlow'.

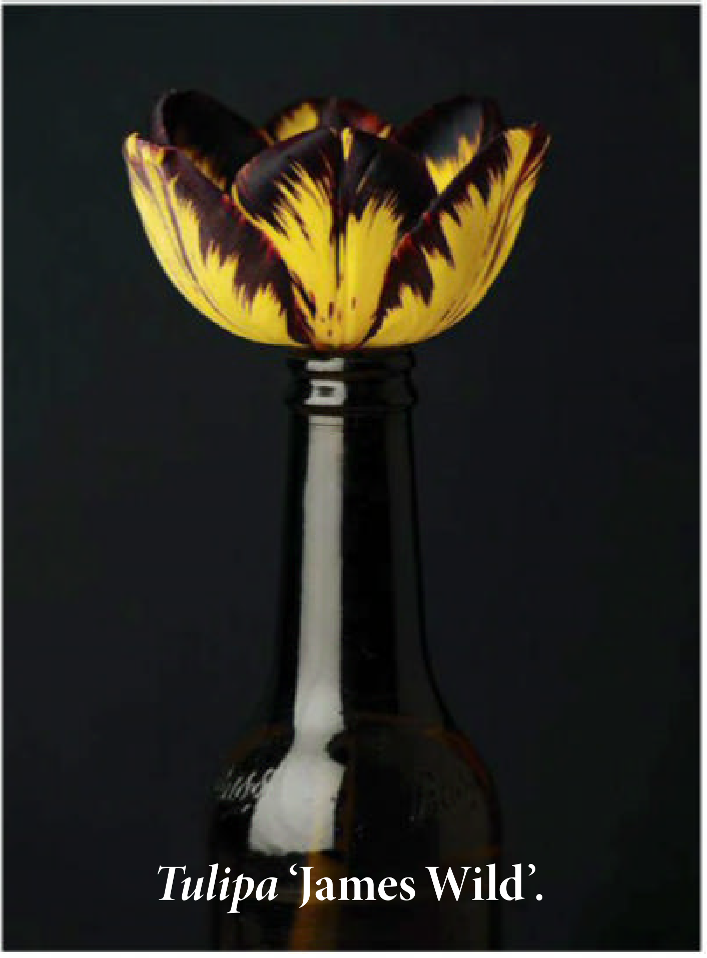

Tulipa 'Goldfinder'.


Tulipa 'Lord Stanley'.


Tulipa 'Airy'.


Tulipa 'Mabel'.


Tulipa 'Solis'.


Tulipa 'James Wild'.

Special measures

Millwood Plants exudes its owners' passion for rare and unusual specimens that are also – by necessity of their growing location – extremely hardy

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

This image Plants are trialled in the woodland garden for three years or more and only offered for sale once they have proved themselves hardy.

Facing page *Dicentra* 'Burning Hearts', a herbaceous perennial hybrid of *Dicentra peregrina*, from the mountains of Japan. The striking contrast between foliage and flower makes this plant particularly distinctive and desirable.

Gary Buckingham and Paul Navin's small nursery, in the heart of the Taw Valley in Devon, is immaculate and well organised, not a weed-filled pot in sight. Such high standards also set the tone for the plants. "We search out plants that are rare, choice and unusual, mostly for shade, from China, Japan and America," says Paul. This passion, allied with Gary's instinctive eye for colour and selecting a good garden plant, ensures the nursery is always full of treasures. But there are other factors to be considered. "As well as being out of the ordinary, plants have to be extremely hardy. For much of the year the nursery, set within nine acres of meadowland, is in the shade of a hill. We don't see the sun in December and January. In cold periods, the ground is frozen for weeks, but in summer, the nursery becomes a sun trap," says Gary.

In spring, a walk through the nursery reveals a succession of tough yet beautiful plants, including species and cultivars of *Anemone*, *Dicentra*, *Epimedium*, *Podophyllum*, *Primula* and ferns. Two eye-catching gems are *Chloranthus fortunei*, with a ruff of fresh green leaves surrounding white, champagne-scented bottlebrush flowers, and *Viola chaerophylloides* 'Beni-zuru', a tiny plant with a delicious combination of maple-like leaves, lavender-purple flowers and dark-purple stems. Both of these plants deserve to be more widely grown.

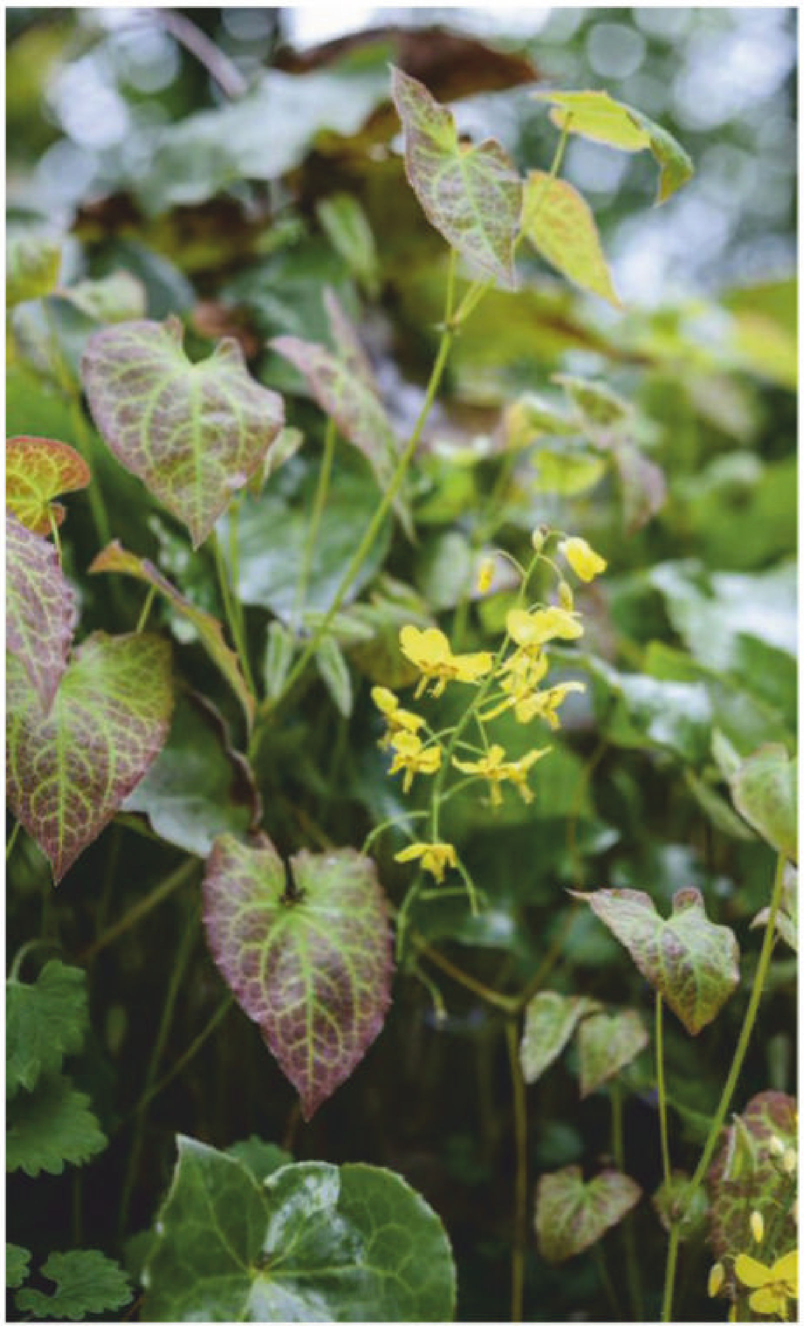
Not all of the plants are rare and unusual. "One of the first plants Gary cultivated was *Primula* 'Wanda', a gift from his great-grandmother," says Paul. "Gary soon realised that primulas were interesting all year round, and came up with the idea of hybridising and selecting those with dark foliage and contrasting light flowers, concentrating on hybrids between *Primula* 'Guinevere' and Barnhaven primulas." One early success was *Primula* 'Millwood Lemon', which has the darkest foliage of all his crosses. This was followed by *Primula* 'Millwood Blush', with apple blossom-pink flowers, and *Primula* 'Millwood Pink Beauty', with deeper pink flowers. He is now developing a series of doubles with bronze leaves, and is also collecting *Anemone nemorosa* cultivars, though this is not always easy. It took two days to complete a recent order from a German website after hours of translating details into English.

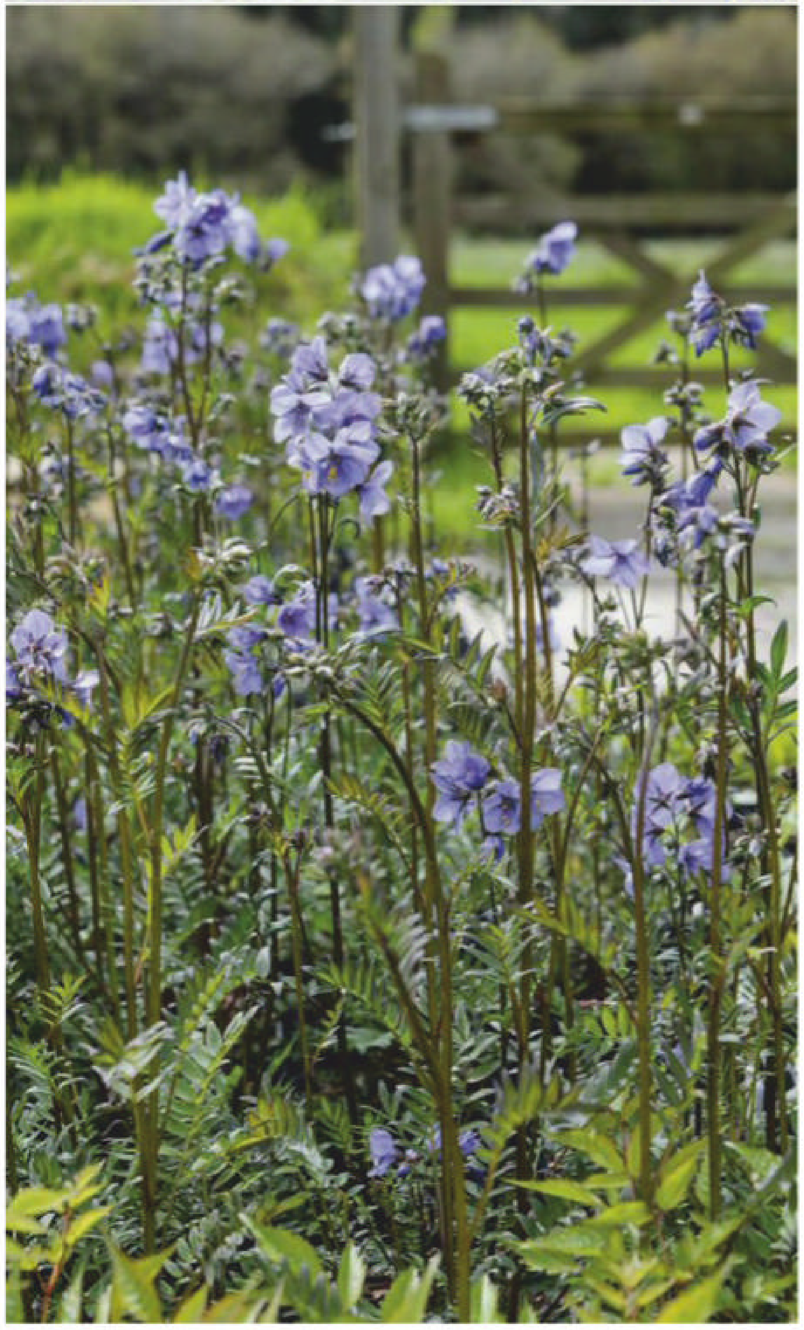
Thankfully, the nursery's rural location and local gardeners' ambivalence about revealing their 'best kept secret' need not be an obstacle to those who love rare plants. Keen to share what they grow with other eager gardeners, Gary and Paul take their choice selections to shows and plant fairs all over Britain. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Millwood Plants, Colleton Mills, Devon EX37 9ET. **Tel** 07756 515084. **Website** millwoodplants.com for details of plant fairs and shows in 2019.

Turn the page for 16 key plants



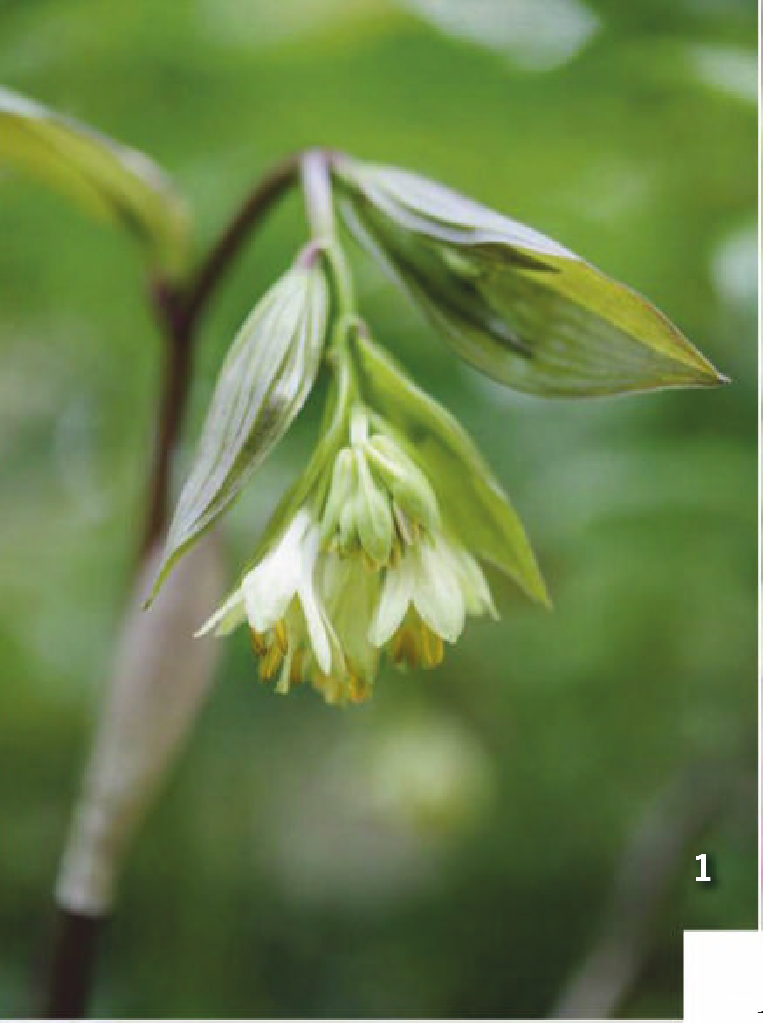


Clockwise from top left

***Epimedium* x *perralchicum* 'Fröhnleiten'** is a vigorous, evergreen groundcover plant that forms dense clumps of leathery, coppery-red leaves with bold, green veins when young – the perfect complement to the bright-yellow flowers.

The colourful, plant-filled polythene tunnel is a source of great excitement and expectation for visiting plantspeople.

***Polemonium yezoense* var. *hidakanum* 'Bressingham Purple'**, whose foliage is strongly tinted purple in spring and autumn, bears clusters of sky-blue flowers, marked in darker blue with a small, white centre from late spring into midsummer.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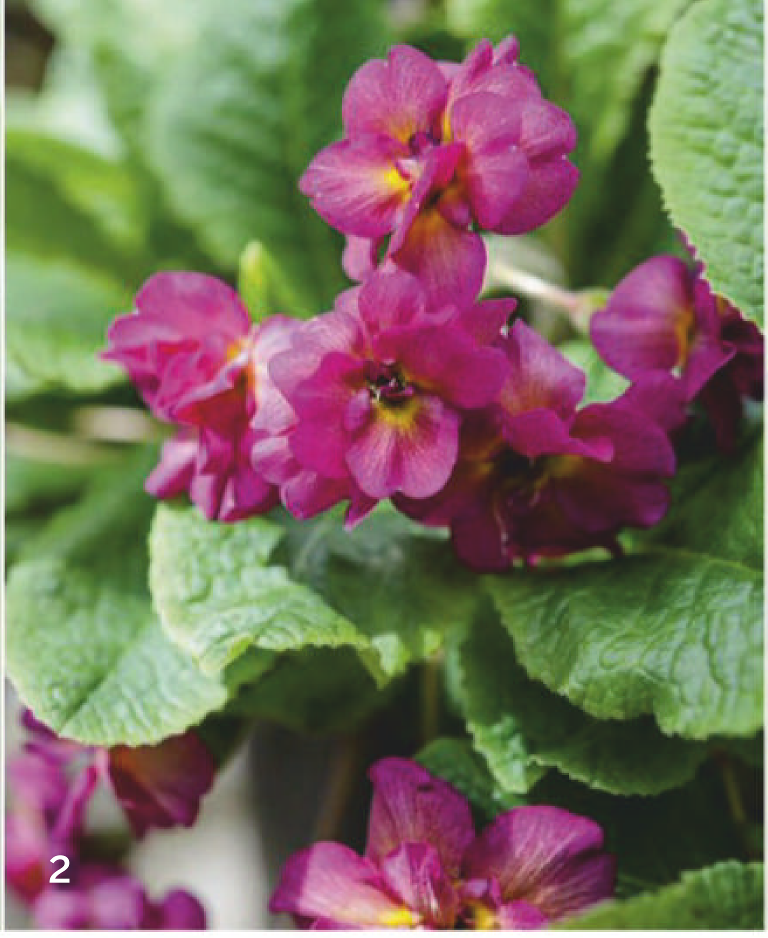
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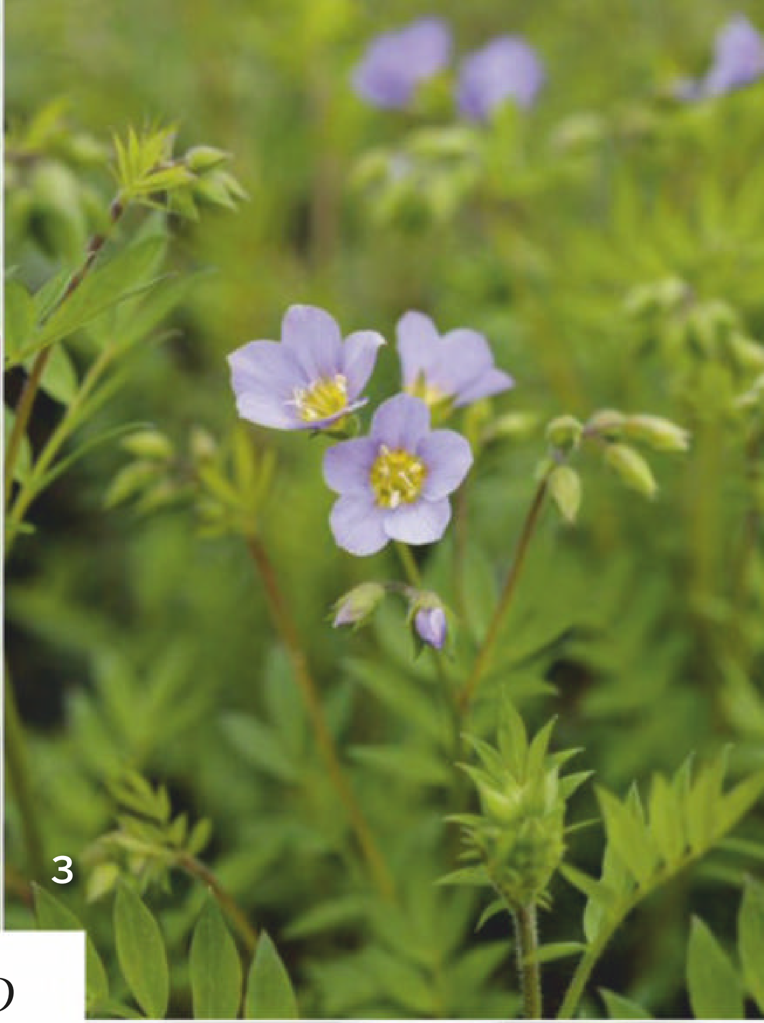
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16 KEY PLANTS FROM MILLWOOD

1 *Disporum longistylum*
Greenish-yellow flowers appear in spring. Has black berries in autumn. Needs moisture-retentive, well-drained soil in full shade. 60cm x 30cm.

2 *Primula* 'Millwood Double'
Tough yet beautiful. The first and best flush of flowers appears in May, then sporadically throughout the year. Best in shade but will tolerate some sunshine if the soil stays moist. 15cm x 15cm.

3 *Polemonium* 'Lambrook Mauve'
With plenty of light, this flowers from mid April to June. Cut it back and it repeats. Likes well-drained soil. 45cm x 45cm. RHS H7[†].

4 *Omphalodes cappadocica* 'Starry Eyes'
White flowers, tinted pale blue, with a blue 'star' in the middle. A shade lover, it flowers in spring and again in autumn. 15cm x 15cm. RHS H5.

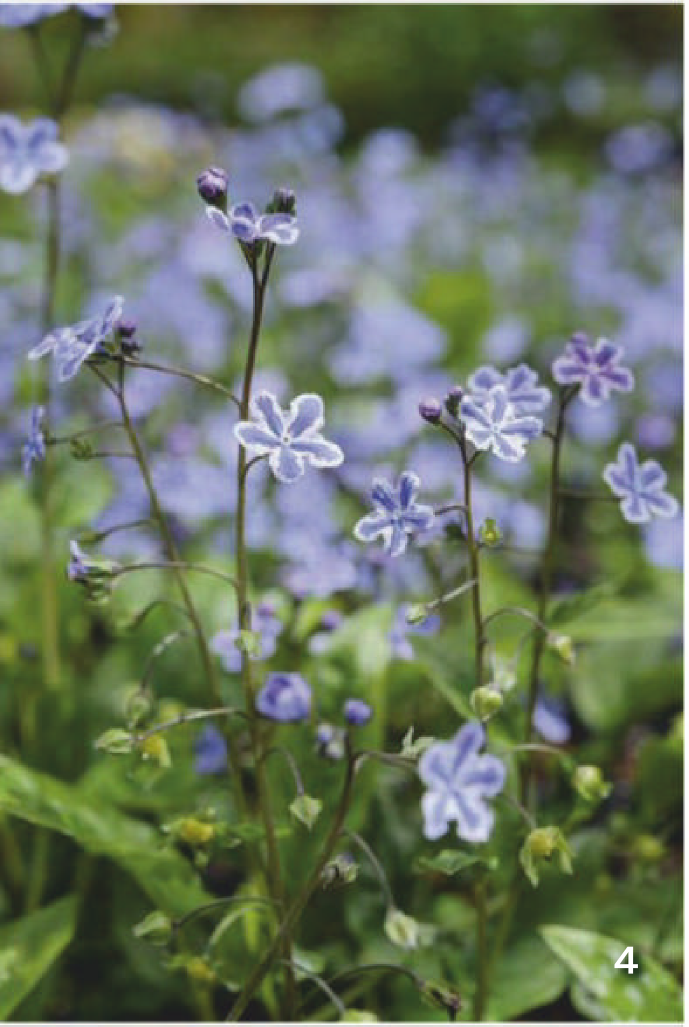
5 *Anemone nemorosa* 'Vestal'
Gorgeous, with tight, button-double, white flowers. Prefers well-drained soil, plenty of moisture in spring and drier conditions later in the year. Forms dense carpets once naturalised. 15cm x 30cm. AGM*. RHS H5.

6 *Hylomecon japonica*
Perfect for a cold spot in damp shade, which will be brightened by its golden spring flowers. Flowers better after a cold winter. 15cm x 60cm.

7 *Paris polyphylla*
A spectacular sight in spring with its wonderful architectural, spider-like flowers and upright form. Likes moist shade and morning or evening light. Bees love it. 30cm x 30cm.

8 *Anemonella thalictroides* 'Cameo'
Airy leaves appear from March, followed by beautiful, double anemone flowers in April to June. Likes shade, some sun and well-drained soil. Summer dormant, good for clay soils. 15cm x 15cm. RHS H6.

• Turn to page 88 for more key plants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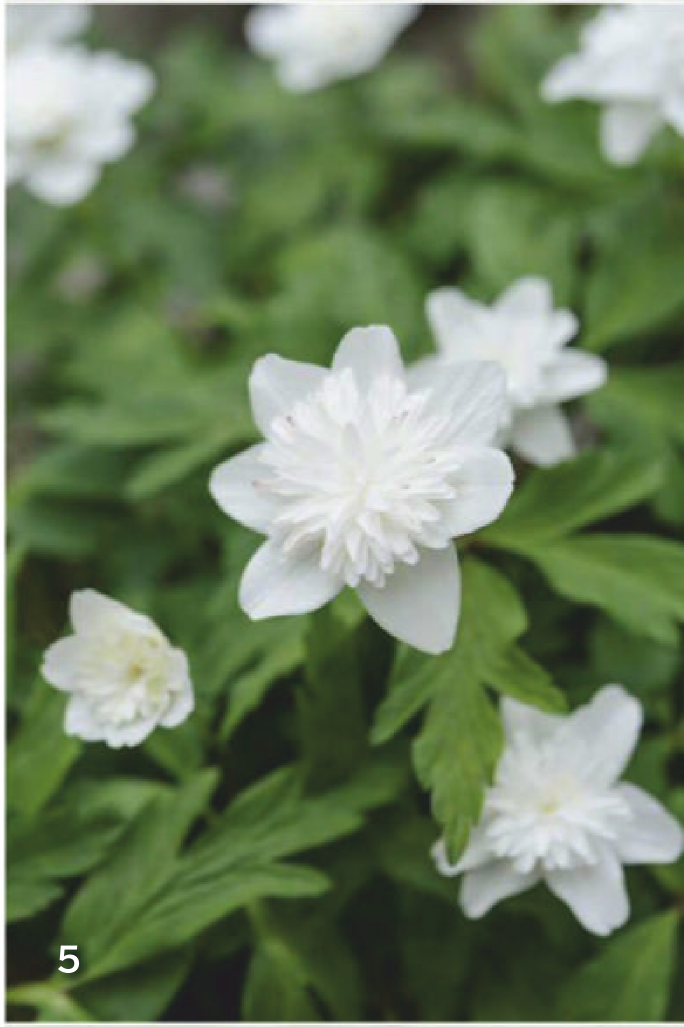
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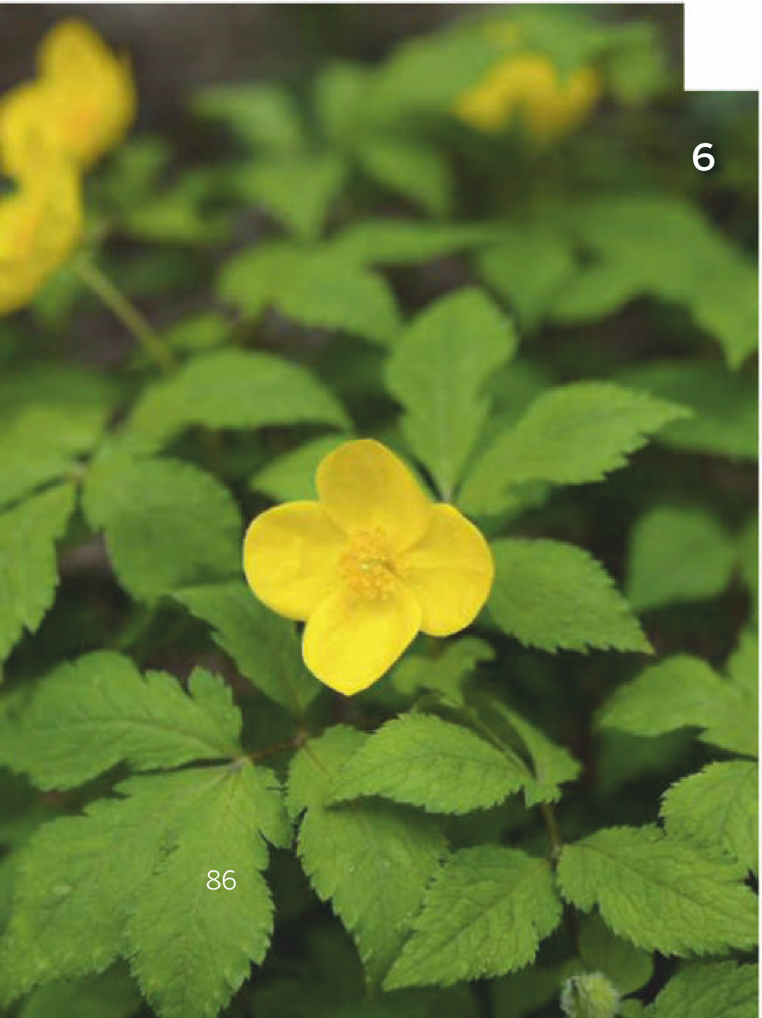
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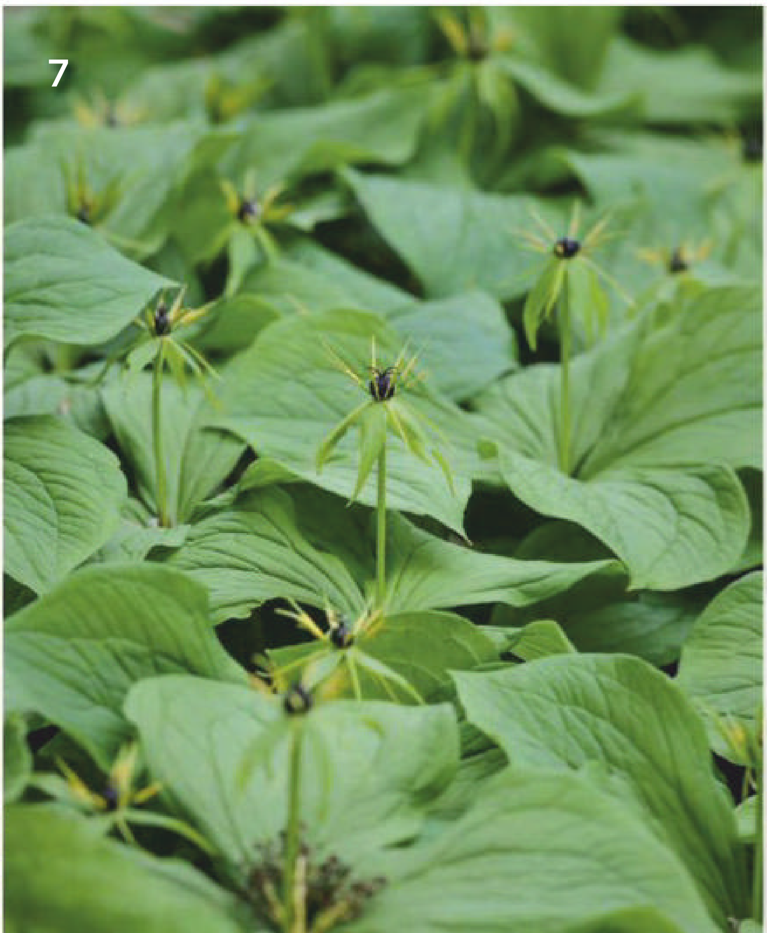
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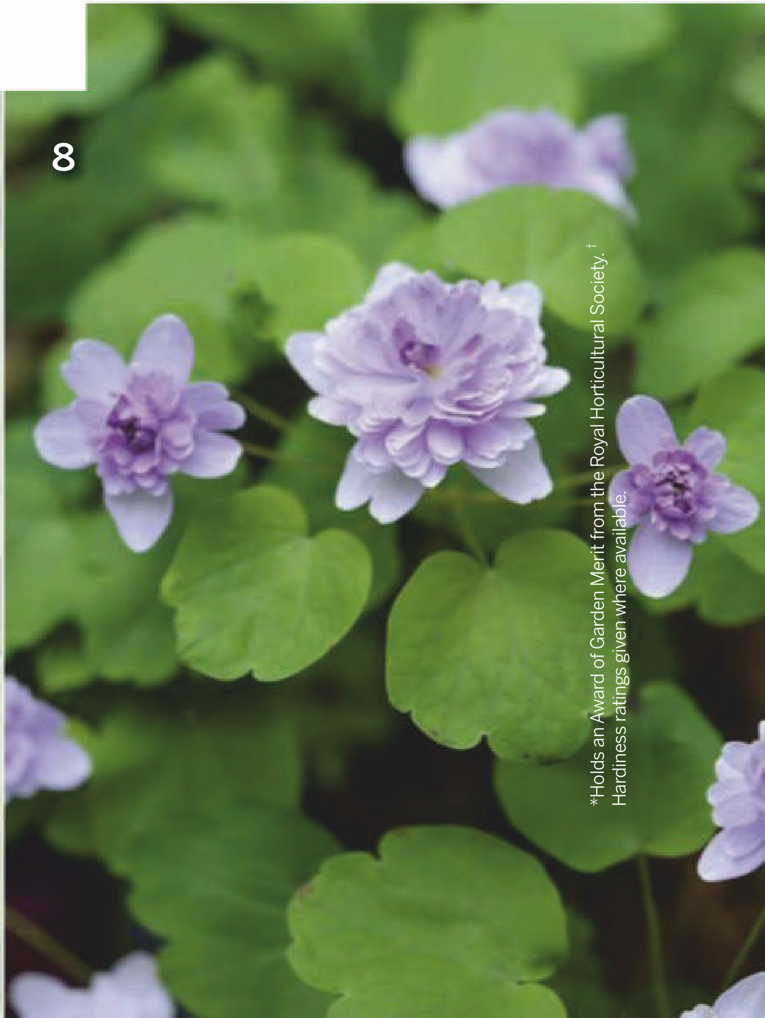
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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. † Hardiness ratings given where available.

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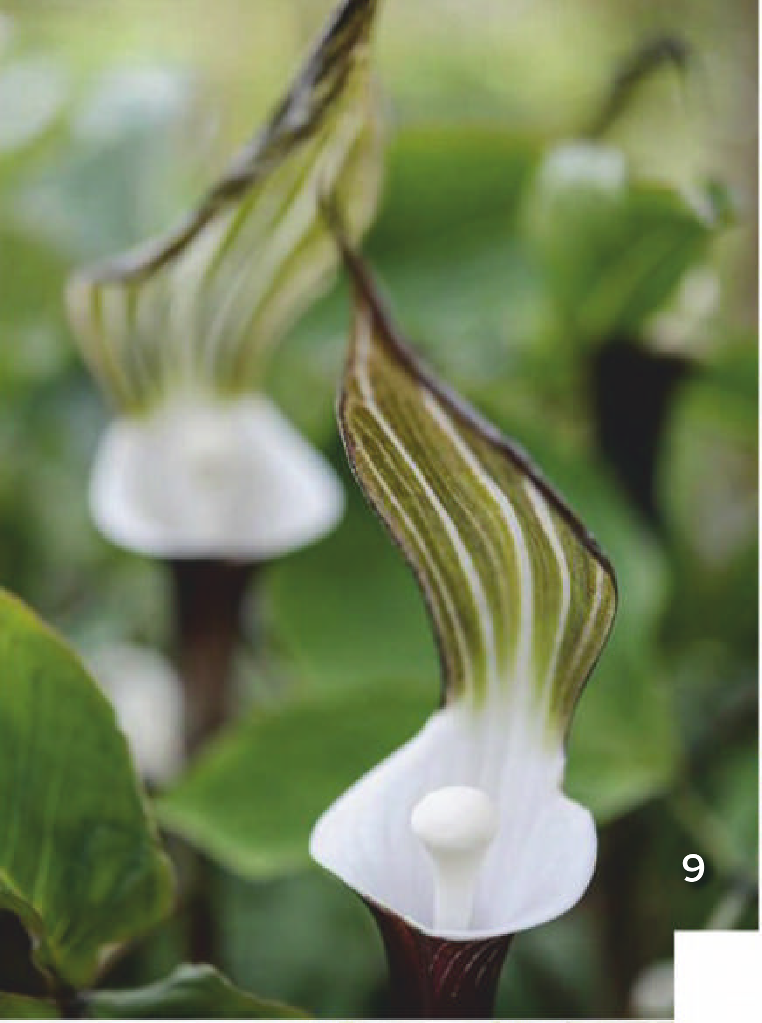
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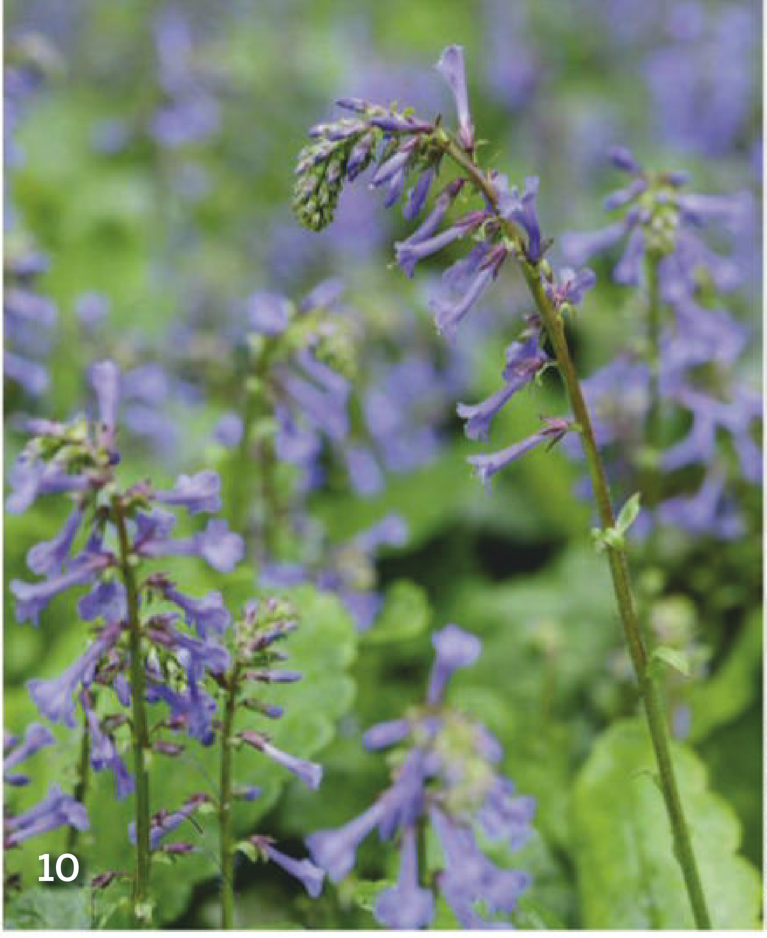
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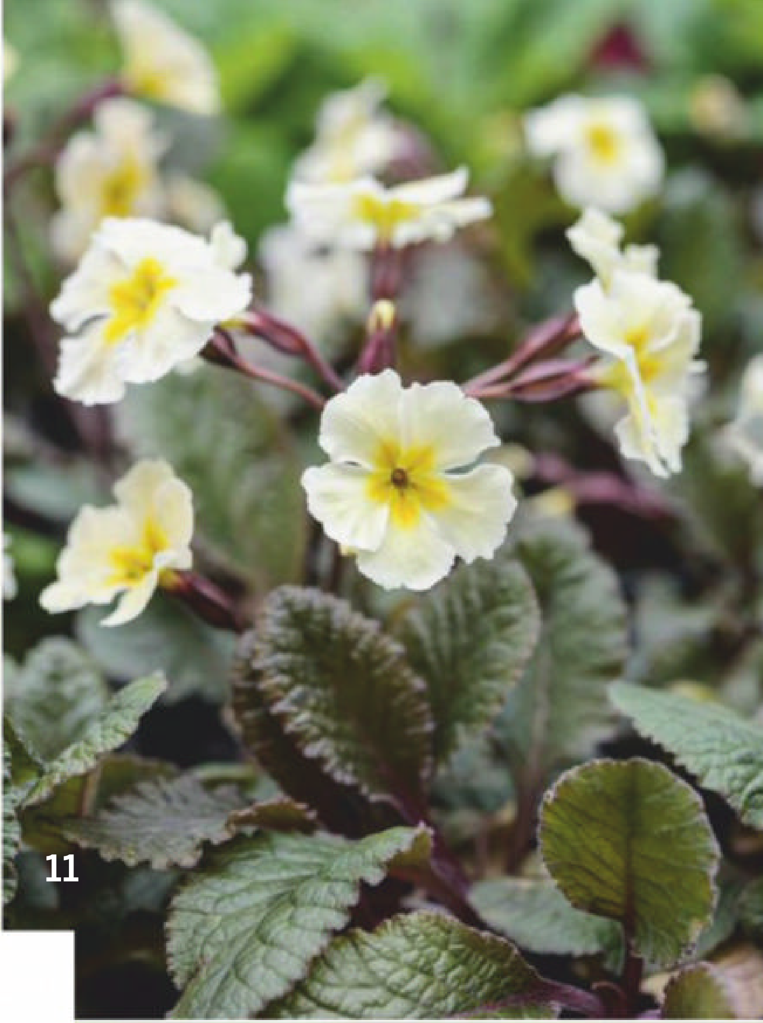
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16 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

9 *Arisaema sikokianum*
Likes well-drained soil in cool shade all day. When happy, it naturalises and looks magical in a group. 45cm x 60cm. RHS H3, USDA 5a-8b.

10 *Wulfenia* x *schwarzii*
Dark, glossy, evergreen leaves with fantastic sprays of dark-blue flowers in spring. Tolerates dry shade and is loved by bees. 30cm x 15cm.

11 *Primula* 'Millwood Lemon'
Buttery yellow flowers set against dark, chocolate-brown foliage, from May to June and again from September to November. Likes moist soil in partial to full shade. 15cm x 15cm.

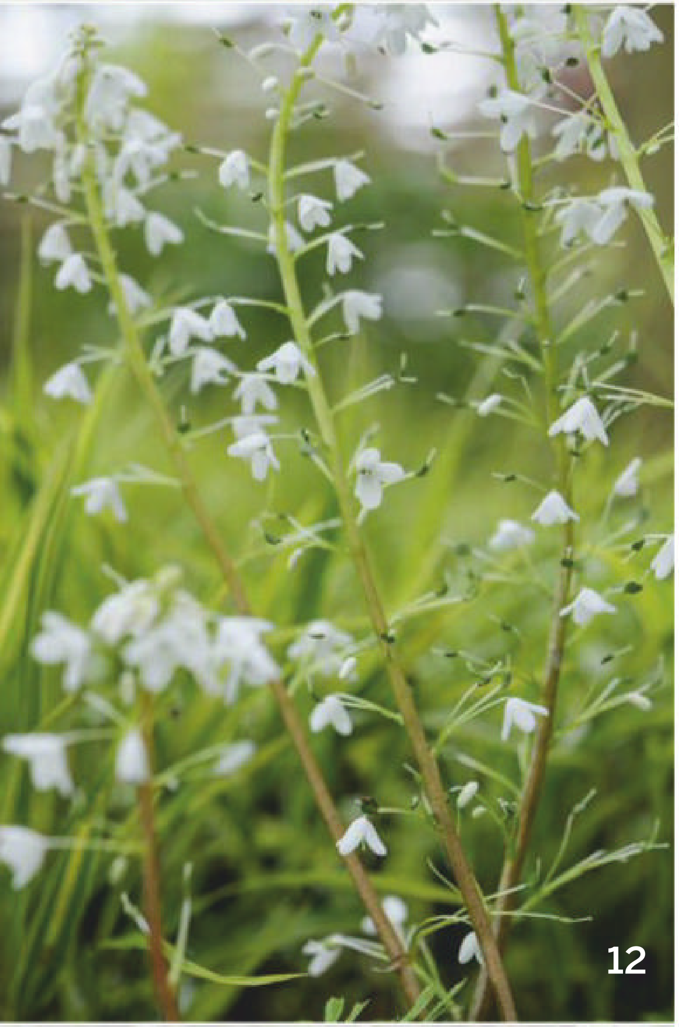
12 *Pteridophyllum racemosum*
This looks like a fern, but sends up a long, slender stem of drooping white flowers in May. Looks wonderful in groups in moist shade. 30cm x 30cm.

13 *Epimedium* 'Hakubai'
An evergreen alpine *Epimedium* that's ideal for troughs, forming a tight clump of leaves with pure-white flowers appearing prolifically from April to June. Requires shade and good drainage. 15cm x 30cm.

14 *Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum* 'Pewter Lace'
The burgundy-lilac leaves are spectacular. Likes moisture and shade from the midday sun, but be patient, as the natural colour takes two years to appear. 30cm x 60cm. USDA 5a-8b.

15 *Trillium rivale*
This ideal woodland plant needs plenty of shade and well-drained soil; keep dry when dormant. Flowers from April to May opening white, then becoming pink. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H4.

16 *Sinopodophyllum hexandrum*
Beautiful, chocolate-and-green marbled leaves and simple white flowers followed by red fruit. Flowers better in morning or evening light. Forms large clumps in moist soil. 90cm x 30cm. RHS H7.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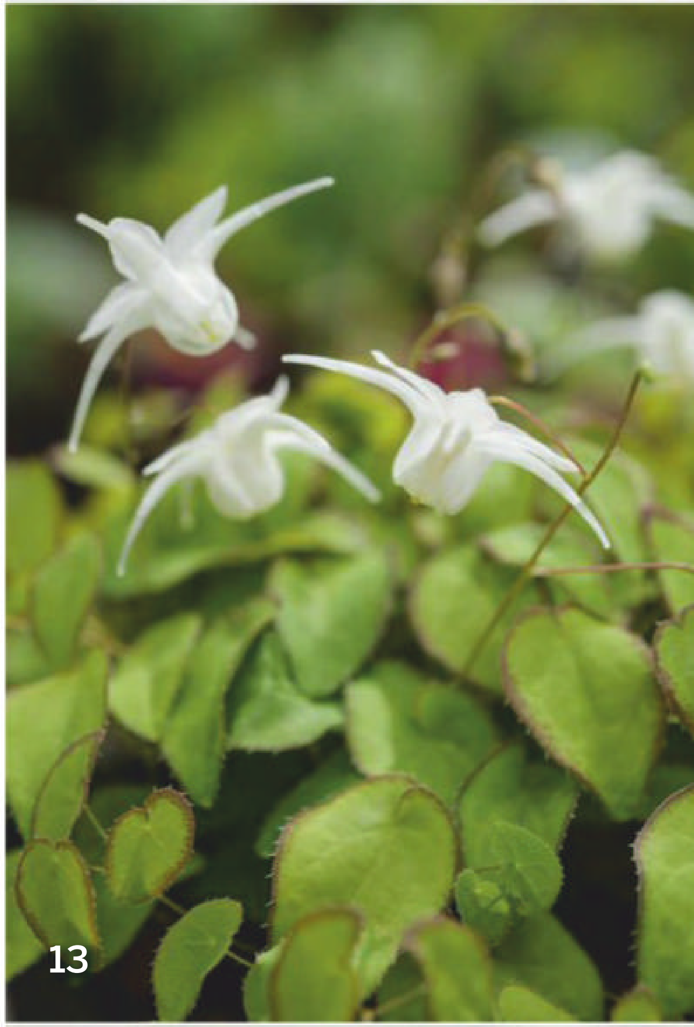
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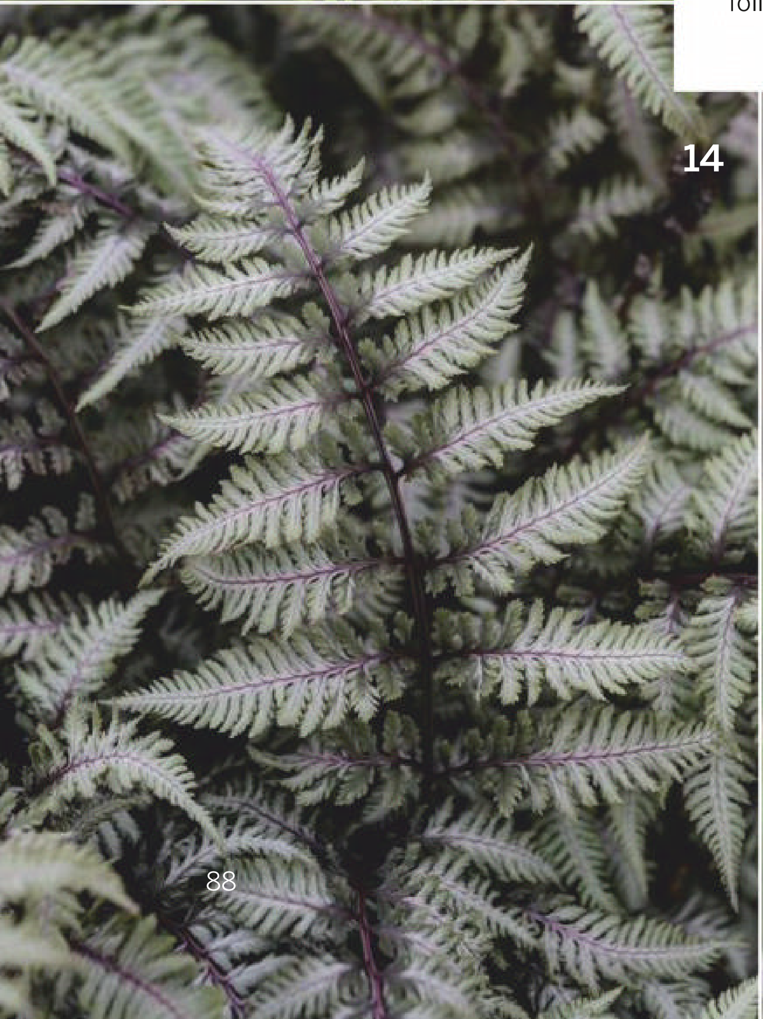
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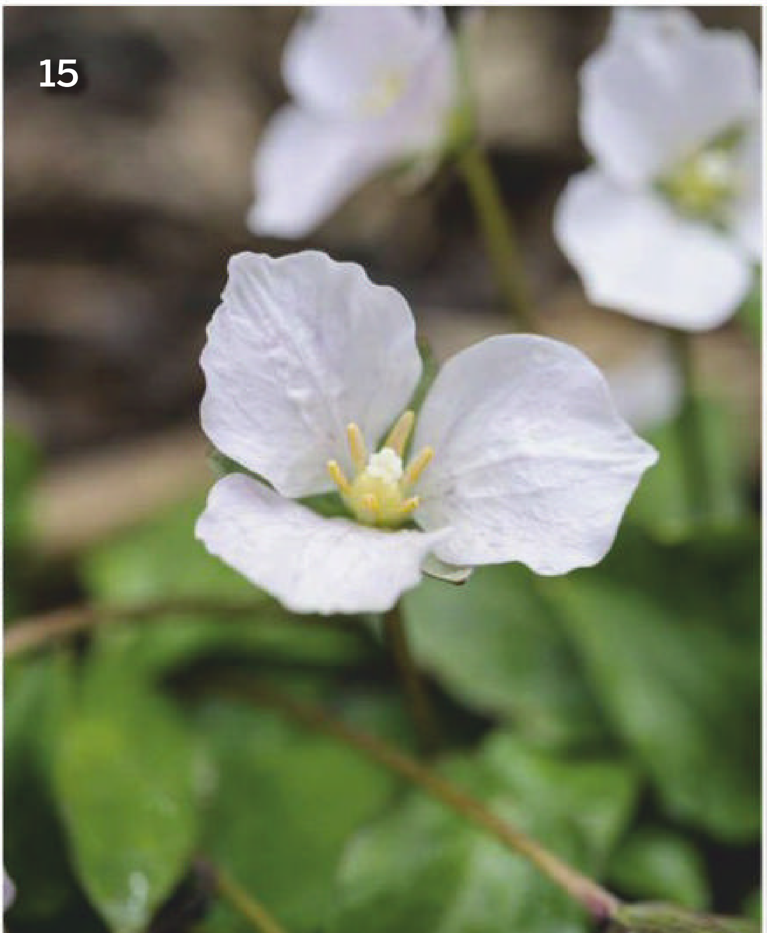
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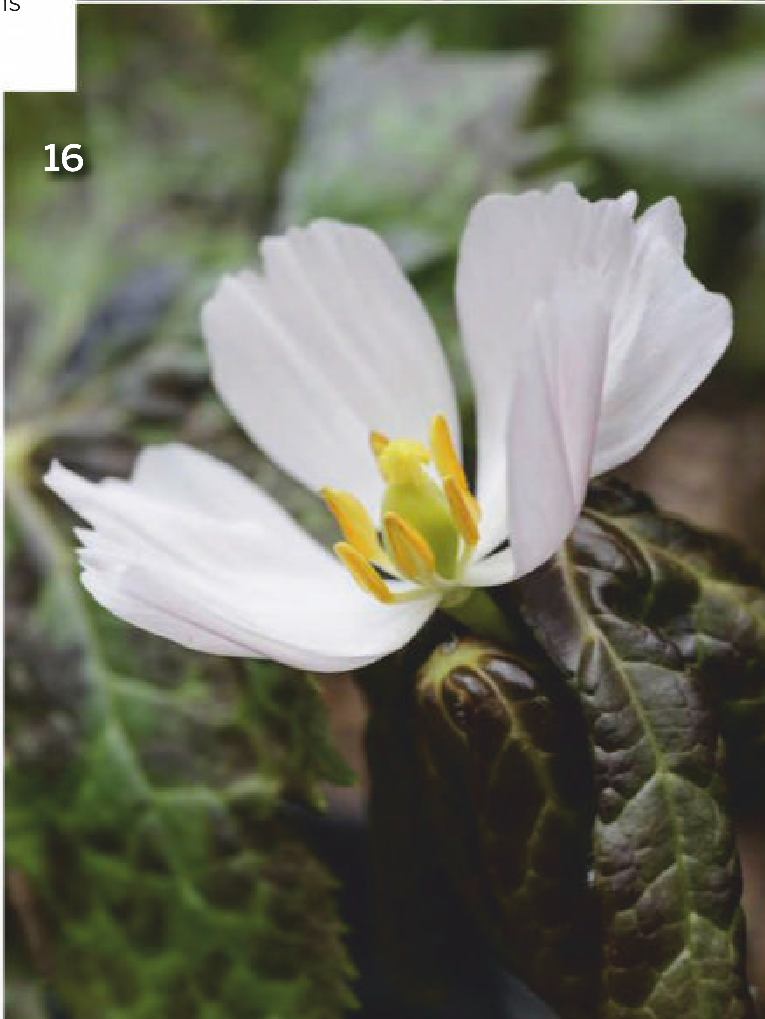
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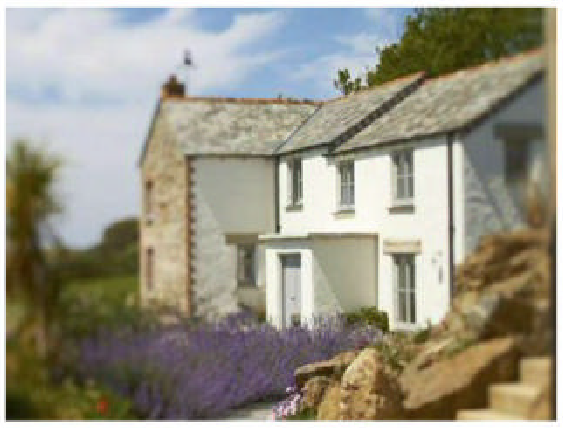
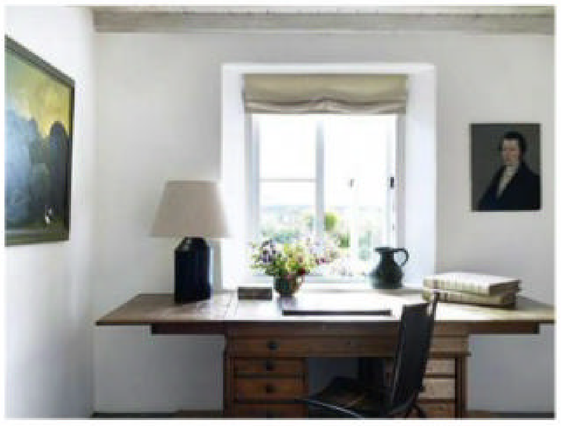
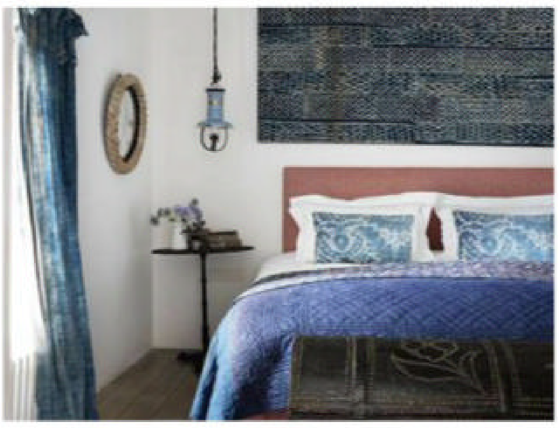
ALL I WANT IS THE SEA AND A LITTLE COTTAGE JUST TO BE







For those seeking spectacular coastal views combined with rural tranquillity, then Treverra Cottage, in the popular North Cornish resort of Rock, is an ideal holiday location

This charming 19th century farm cottage sleeps up to 8 and has been recently renovated and decorated with an eclectic mix of British and Scandinavian antiques. Set in a 14-acre site of fields and beautifully landscaped gardens, the property sits just above Porthilly Cove with views across the Camel Estuary to the picturesque fishing port of Padstow.

Despite its quiet location, the local beaches and amenities of Rock are all within easy reach, either by car or via the local network of footpaths. That is, if you can drag yourself away, as on site facilities include a tennis court, jacuzzi and spectacular 15 metre, oval infinity pool. There is also a fully equipped wet room for all your beach kit, a vegetable garden to help yourself from, not to mention plenty of peaceful spots to sit and admire the view.

Adjacent to the cottage is a little double bedded studio that can added in to the rental or taken on its own off-peak, as a perfect cosy retreat.

Prices start from £1,500 for a short break in the cottage and £70 a night in the studio.

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Seed sowing

WORDS **AARON BERTELSEN**
PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

Drawing on a wealth of experience in growing vegetables at Great Dixter, Aaron Bertelsen shares his tips for sowing seed

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW MONTGOMERY. *THE GREAT DIXTER COOKBOOK: RECIPES FROM AN ENGLISH GARDEN* BY AARON BERTELSEN, PHAIDON PHAIDON.COM

There is nothing I enjoy more than browsing the vegetable seed section at a good nursery. For me, it's the grown-up equivalent of a trip to the sweet shop. The colours, the pictures – it's all positively mouth-watering. Real life being what it is, though, I would say that 95 per cent of the seeds I keep in my old wooden wine box are purchased online. While it may lack the thrill of the real-world retail experience, online seed buying has made great strides in the past few years, with more specialist suppliers springing up all the time. Shopping online is an excellent way of supporting these smaller suppliers, and you are also more likely to find unusual and heritage varieties, as well as the open-pollinated varieties you will need to grow if you want to save your own seed for future growing seasons. Increasingly, I am trying to stick to organic seed too. So many chemicals are used in traditional commercial seed production, and I am not sure I want to risk traces of them ending up in my food.

Beyond this, my main consideration when buying seeds is: what do I want to eat? There is no point growing things that look pretty if you're not going to use them in the kitchen. My advice to anyone with limited space or time, or who is new to growing vegetables, is to focus on salads and herbs – quick and easy to grow, they bring so much freshness and flavour to the table for comparatively little effort. Whatever you decide to grow, though, careful sowing will maximise your chances of success. Here's how I do it.

Sowing under glass Here at Great Dixter our soil is heavy clay. It holds on to a lot of water and is slow to warm up in the spring. This is one of the reasons why I do most of my seed sowing under glass. It also gives ▷

Remember to sow sparingly; if plants are too closely packed, you will find it difficult to thin them out without causing damage

▷ you greater control over the ultimate spacing of the plants – which is important, if you are a control freak like me – and there is less waste of seed.

The first steps are to make sure your pots are clean – I sow most crops into 7.5cm pots – and to buy a bag of good seed compost. Tamp the compost down by tapping the pot firmly against a hard surface, or lightly pressing it with your hand. You just need enough pressure to get rid of any air holes and make sure the compost doesn't sink too much when you first water the pot, leaving the seeds exposed. One way to make sure of this is by watering the compost and allowing that water to percolate through before sowing. This is a good technique to use with bean, sweet pea, courgette and pumpkin seeds, which may rot if they sit in too much water.

Once the surface is level, sprinkle the seed sparingly over it. Remember that each seed is a potential plant, and if they are too closely packed you will find it difficult to thin them out without causing damage. Finish with a thin covering of seed compost – ideally, about twice the depth of the seed itself. Try to make sure the soil is at the same level in all the pots. This will help you to water evenly. Then – assuming you have not already watered the compost underneath – water the pots. The best way to do this is to take them all outside and put them on the ground. Fill your watering can and start by watering the ground next to the pots, only moving the rose over them once you can see that the water is flowing smoothly and gently, otherwise an initial spurt of water may dislodge the seeds. Put the pots somewhere where they will get plenty of light – a windowsill is perfect.

Direct sowing Many crops can be sown direct, but I tend to use this technique mainly for vegetables such as carrots and parsnips that have a tap root, and don't like to be disturbed. It can work well, but do make sure the soil is warm enough before you sow: if it is too cold, at best the seeds will take longer to germinate and at worst they will just sit there and rot. You can use horticultural fleece both to warm the soil before sowing, and then to protect the newly sown area afterwards. You will also need to prepare the soil well, digging it over thoroughly and removing any stones and lumps that might prevent the emerging seedlings from pushing through – the phrase that is often used is 'a fine tilth'. In practice this means that the texture of the soil should be rather like fine breadcrumbs, although this is much easier said than done.

When you are (finally) ready to sow, mark out your eventual vegetable row with a string line and make a shallow drill along its length, using the point of a hoe or the prong of a fork. Your drill should be twice the depth of the seed you are sowing. Sow sparingly – remember, you will need to thin the emerging seedlings regularly in order to allow some of them to develop to maturity. In the case of a crop such as carrots, this is a bonus: the thinnings are delicious added to a salad. Cover the seeds with soil, and water in well. Don't forget to label your rows clearly. I like to use a stout wooden label at either end, to avoid any confusion. □

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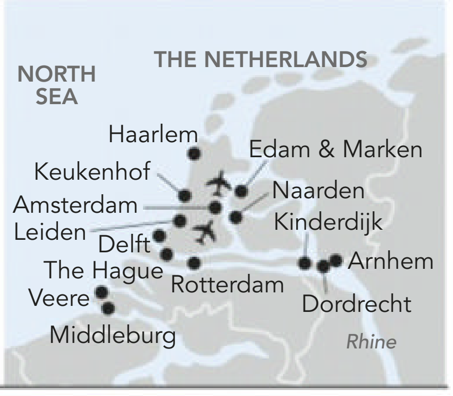
SPRING FLOWERS & THE GOLDEN AGE OF DUTCH ART

A cruise exploring the art treasures & horticultural highlights of the Netherlands aboard the MS Royal Crown – 15th to 25th April & 25th April to 5th May 2020



Spring is the perfect time of year to immerse yourself in the cultural and horticultural splendours of the Netherlands. During our voyage aboard the wonderfully comfortable MS Royal Crown, we will explore the countryside in some depth, visiting the magnificent flower displays of the Keukenhof, the historic Castle and Gardens of Middachten, the picturesque towns of the Zuider Zee, the Hortus Botanicus, the oldest botanical garden in the Netherlands and of course the art treasures of Amsterdam and The Hague.

The Itinerary in Brief

Day 1 London, Bristol or Edinburgh to Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Fly by scheduled flight or travel by Eurostar train via Brussels. On arrival into Amsterdam transfer to the MS Royal Crown in Haarlem and embark.

Day 2 Haarlem. After breakfast, depart for a morning walking tour of Haarlem which concludes with a visit to the Frans Hals Museum, home to a spectacular display of 16th and 17th century portraits, still lifes and landscapes. Return to the MS Royal Crown for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

Day 3 Edam & Marken. After breakfast we will visit two unique communities of the Zuider Zee. Our first call will be at Edam, a tranquil little town with drawbridges across canals. Continue on to the fascinating village of Marken where the houses and traditional costumes are reminiscent of the past.

Day 4 Arnhem. After breakfast join an excursion to visit the memorable Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' which houses the world's largest collection of militaria from Operation Market Garden. Alternatively, you may like to visit the private art collection at the Kroller Muller Museum with its late 19th and 20th century paintings. Return to the MS Royal Crown for lunch and enjoy a leisurely afternoon or join the visit to the unique Middachten Castle & Gardens.

Day 5 Dordrecht & Kinderdijk. Enjoy a relaxing morning cruise as we head towards Dordrecht. After lunch on board there will be an excursion to see the nearby marvellous Windmills of Kinderdijk, of which there are 19 in total, dating from 1740.

Day 6 Veere & Middleburg. Today we explore Southern Zeeland, starting in the 13th century town of Veere, a charming place with well-preserved houses and a marina. Return to the ship and sail on to the lovingly restored Medieval town of Middelburg whose 12th century abbey is one of the oldest in the Netherlands. Join an afternoon guided walking tour on arrival.

Day 7 The Hague & Delft. From Rotterdam we depart for a full day tour. Our first stop will be The Hague for a visit to the beautiful Mauritshuis Museum with its marvellous collection of Dutch Golden Age paintings. Afterwards continue on to Delft for a walking tour of this pretty town and a visit to see the Delft Blue Pottery.

Day 8 Leiden. After breakfast we depart for the vibrant city of Leiden, a treasure trove of narrow streets and canals, lined with beautiful 17th century buildings, including ancient alms houses and continue to the Hortus Botanicus, the oldest botanical garden in the Netherlands.

Day 9 Keukenhof Gardens. After breakfast we will drive from Amsterdam to the Keukenhof Gardens for a morning in this extraordinary horticultural heaven. With 32 hectares of flowers, more than seven million bulbs in bloom and 800 varieties of tulips, this is a truly unique and unforgettable experience.

Day 10 Naarden & Amsterdam. After breakfast we will depart for the ancient fortified town of Naarden, one of the best-preserved in Europe with a fascinating history. On arrival enjoy a walking tour, followed by some free time. After lunch on board, the afternoon is at leisure or join the tour to the Rijksmuseum.

Day 11 Amsterdam to London, Bristol or Edinburgh. Disembark after breakfast and return to the UK by scheduled flight or travel by Eurostar to London St Pancras.

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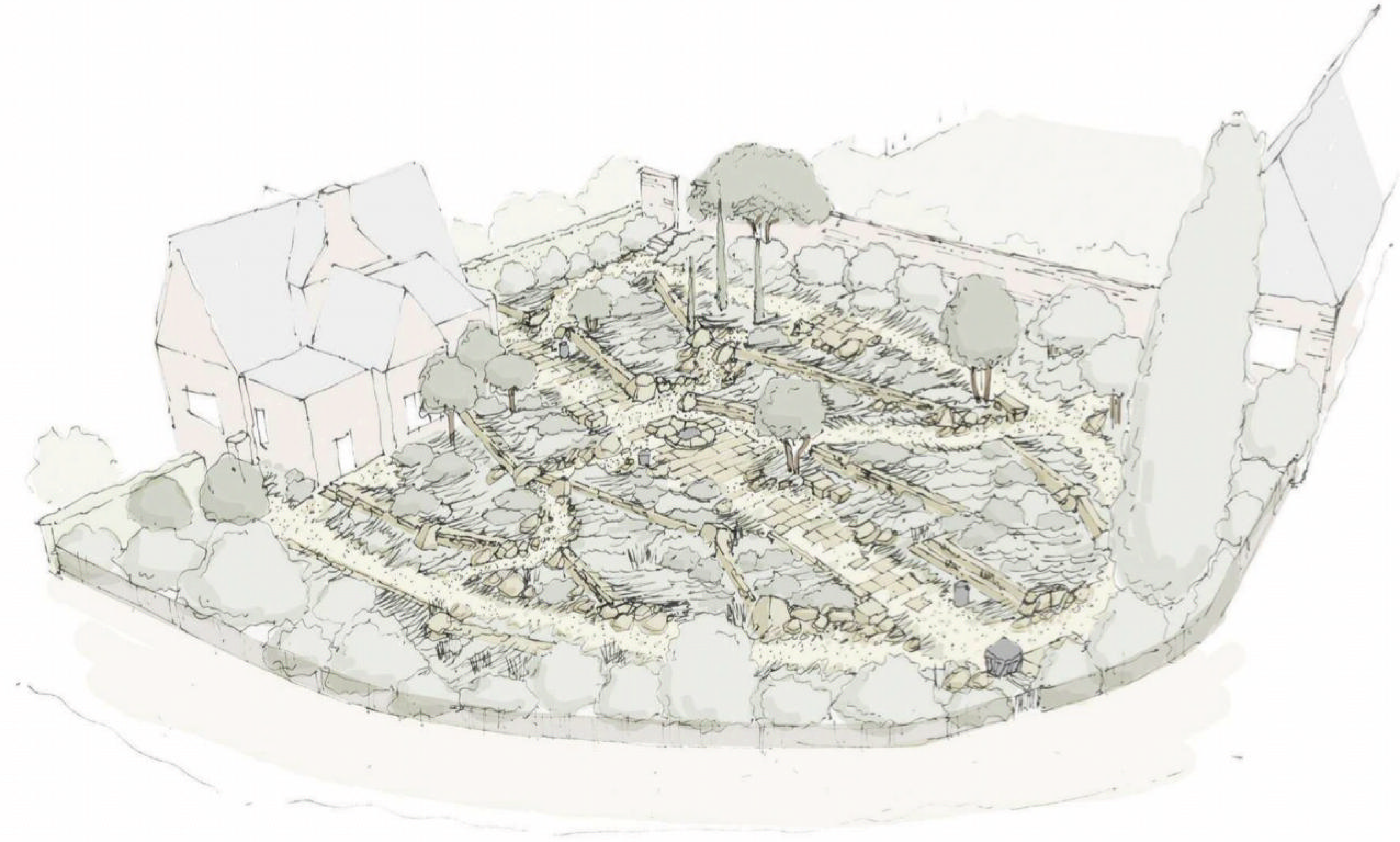

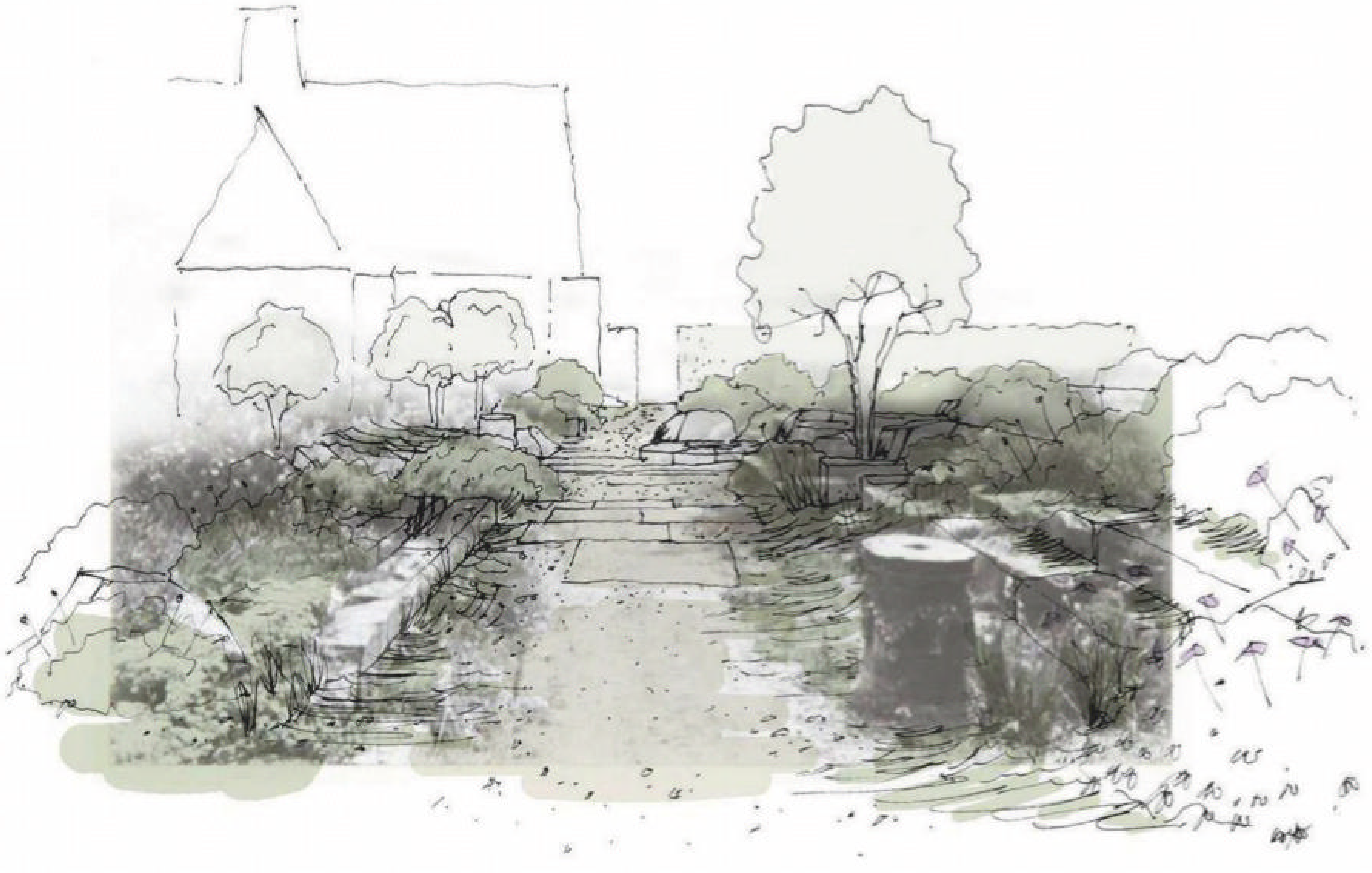

DAN PEARSON STUDIO

DELOS GARDEN

A garden, originally planned by Vita Sackville-West for Sissinghurst but never completed, is to get a new lease of life thanks to designer Dan Pearson. In recent years the garden, which was inspired by a visit Vita and her husband Harold Nicolson took to the Greek island of Delos, has taken on more of a woodland feel, but now Dan in consultation with the Sissinghurst gardening team is recreating its Mediterranean origins with canted stone terraces that will alter the topography to face south. Crushed Kent ragstone will be used to create a network of paths through the terraces, planted with species from the Mediterranean basin. **danpearsonstudio.com**

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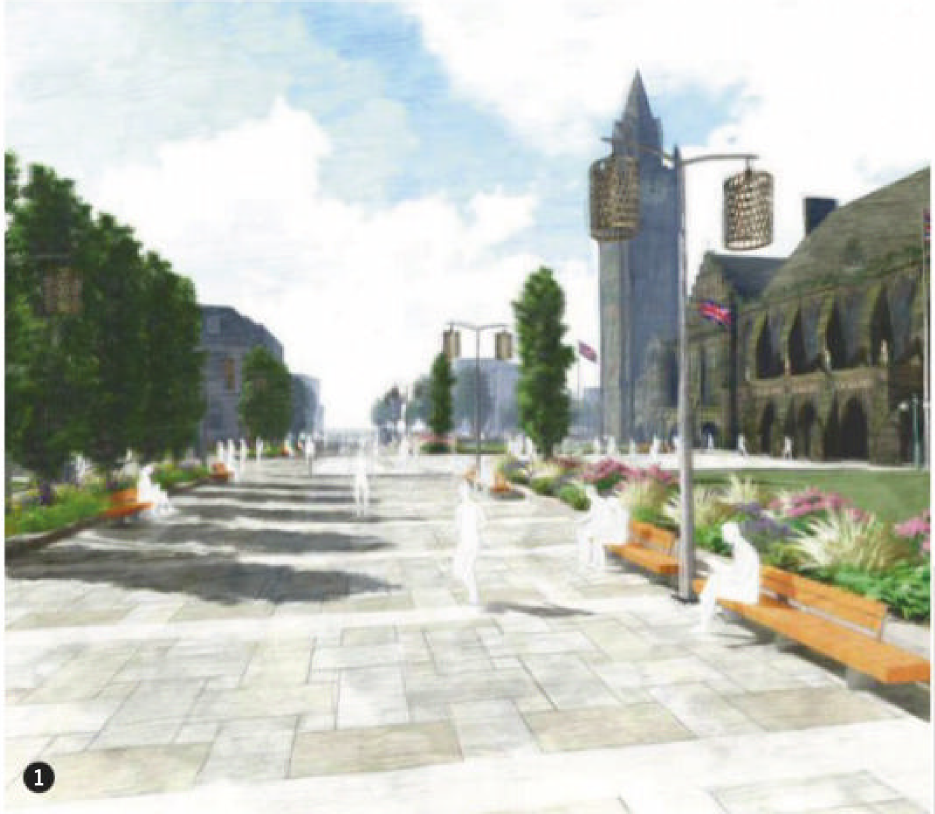
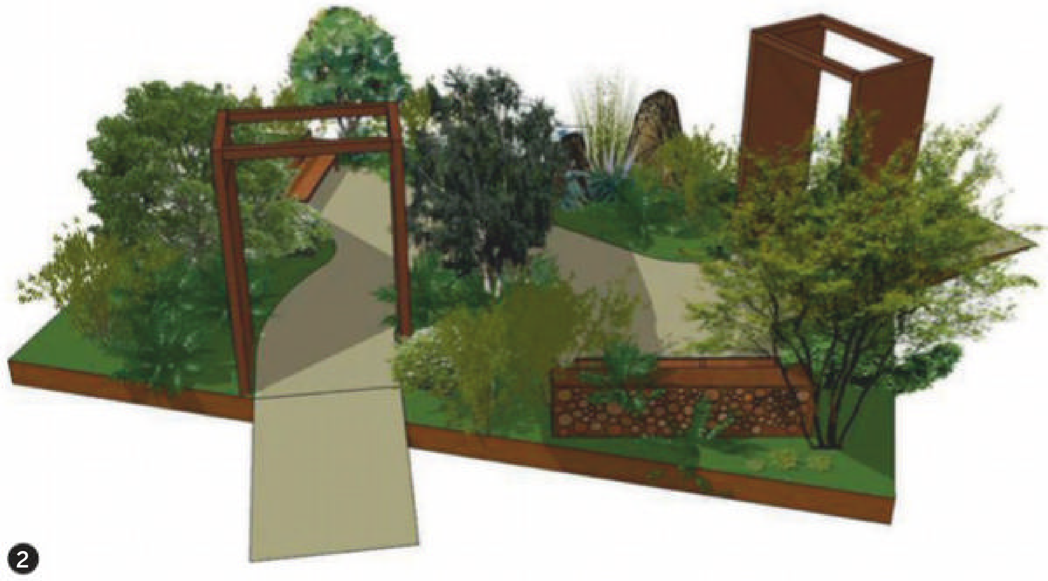
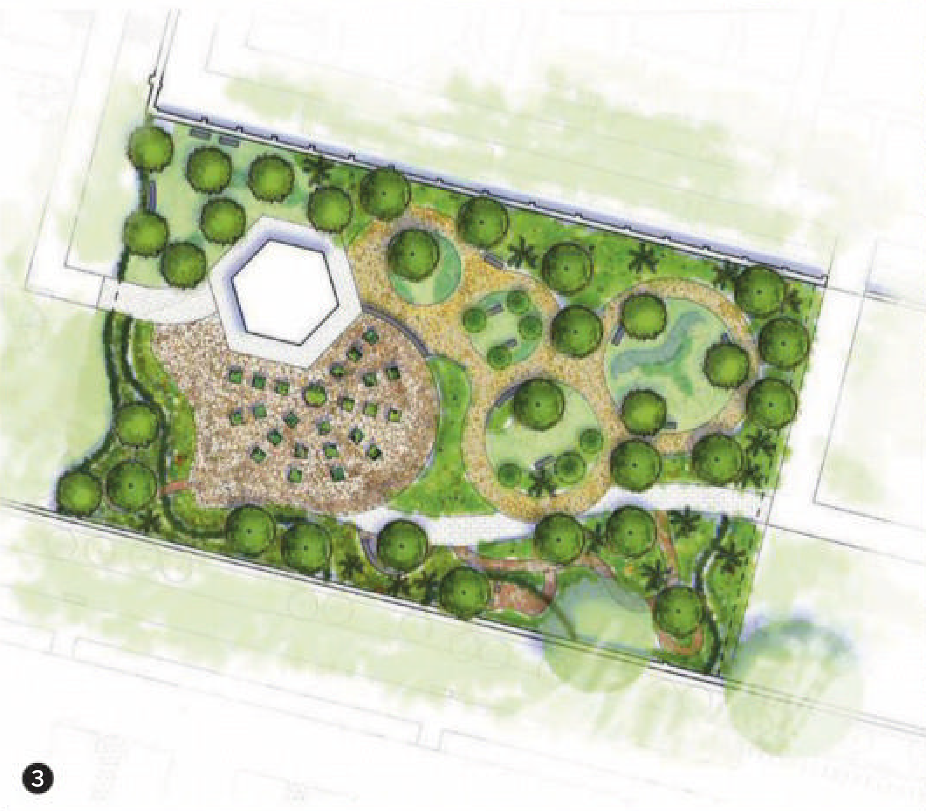
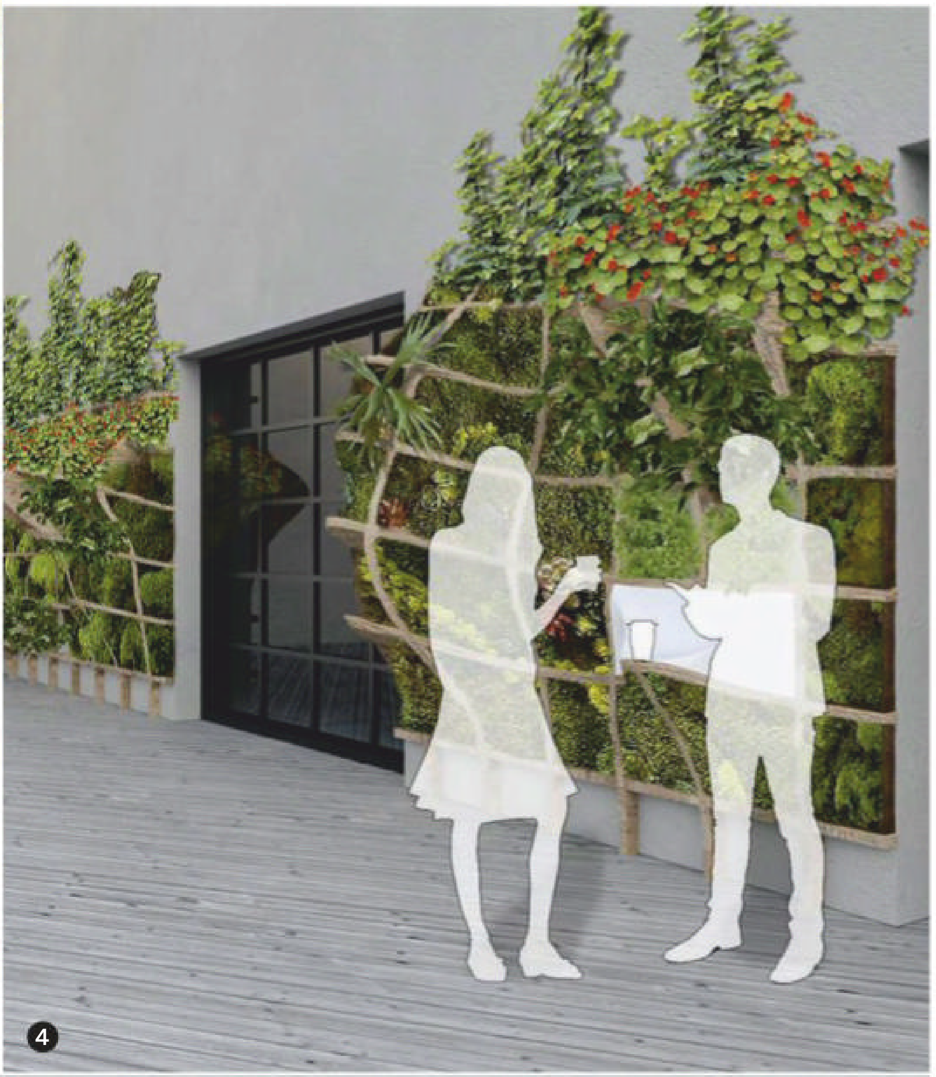
NEWS

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI









① ROCHDALE TOWN HALL SQUARE

Landscape architecture and urban design practice Gillespies has been appointed to develop plans to transform the Town Hall Square in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The project will see existing road and parking replaced by a new square that will be large enough to hold public events, and have extensive pockets of planting. The £3-million regeneration is part of a major project to restore the Town Hall, a Grade-I listed building. Design detailing of sections of the paving includes motifs, depicting the town's textile industry, that are also found in the interior of the Town Hall. **gillespies.co.uk**

② RHS CARDIFF

The RHS flower show season kicks off this month at Cardiff. Among this year's highlights is Gardd Lles or Wellbeing Garden (shown) from the National Botanic Garden of Wales, which uses a soothing white and pastel-coloured planting scheme and seating made from recycled silage sheets to provide spaces for contemplation and mindfulness. The plants, which include grasses and perennials, will be donated to Morriston Hospital in Swansea after the show. Also at the show, gardening charity Perennial will be marking its 180th anniversary with a simple outdoor kitchen, designed by Peter Donegan. 12-14 April. **rhs.org.uk**

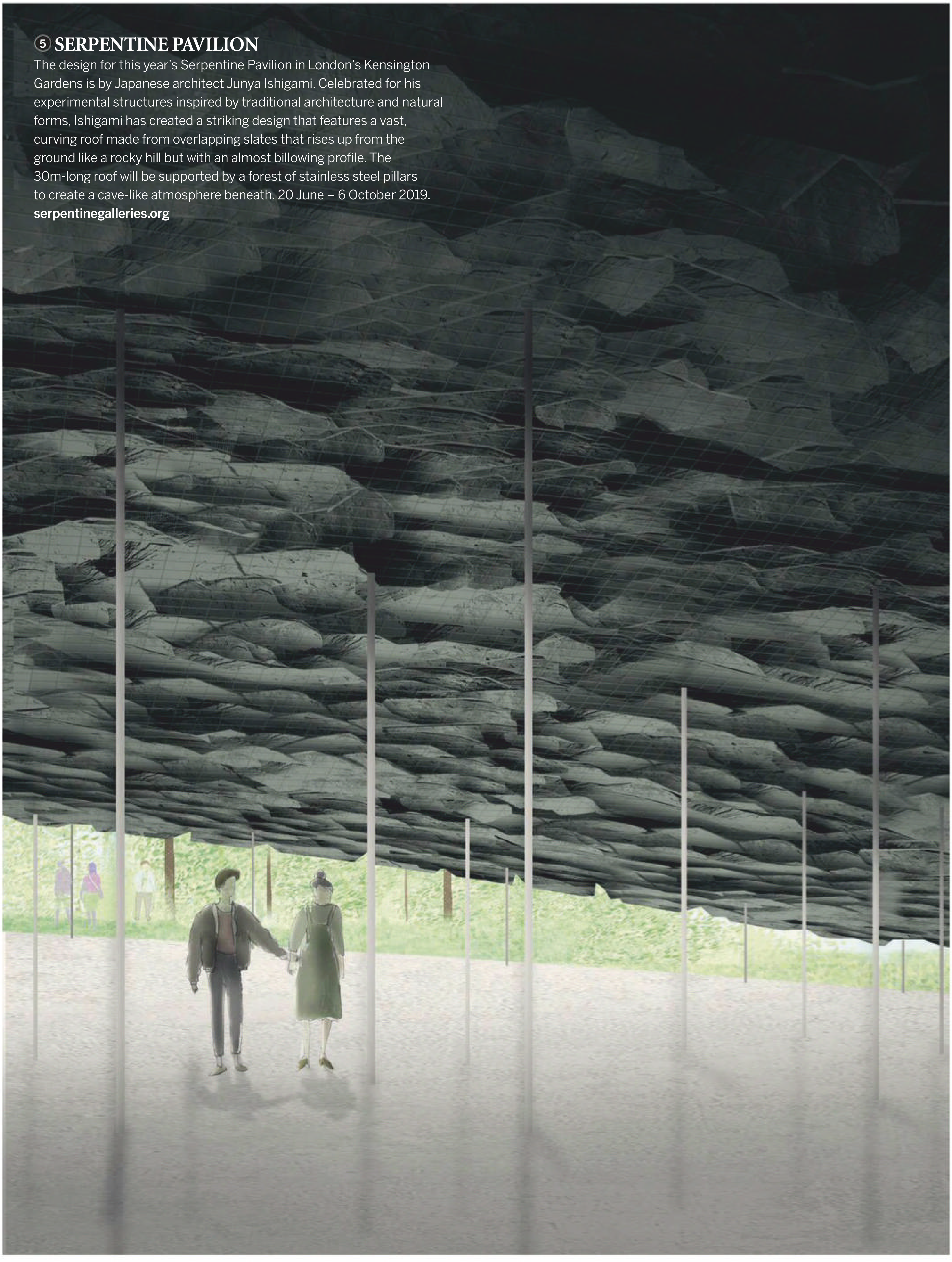
③ WALLED GARDEN

Following months of consultation with more than 20 organisations working in the field of health and wellbeing, a design for the new Wellbeing Garden in the Weston Walled Garden at RHS Bridgewater, Salford has been agreed. Created by Ben Brace, horticultural projects manager at the RHS, the garden will have three distinct spaces: one for reflection, planted with woodland species and enclosed by beech hedging; one for horticultural therapy where users can grow plants of their choosing in raised planters; and a social space, which will be planted with shrubs and herbaceous borders. **rhs.org.uk**

④ GREENING NEW YORK'S ROOF TOPS

Students on the Green Roof Ecology course at the New School in New York have come up with a range of ingenious and ambitious ideas for bringing planting to inner city areas. The interdisciplinary course combines design and urban ecology and is part of a larger green roof research initiative within the Urban Systems Lab. Among the wide-ranging projects are a combined bench and planter, and a modular, green wall system called the Gwaffle (shown) that allows containers filled with plants to fit neatly into the pockets of its wooden, waffle-shaped, wall structure. **newschool.edu**

GILLESPIES, NICHOLAS RUSSELL, RHS, TIMON McPHEARSON



⑤ SERPENTINE PAVILION

The design for this year's Serpentine Pavilion in London's Kensington Gardens is by Japanese architect Junya Ishigami. Celebrated for his experimental structures inspired by traditional architecture and natural forms, Ishigami has created a striking design that features a vast, curving roof made from overlapping slates that rises up from the ground like a rocky hill but with an almost billowing profile. The 30m-long roof will be supported by a forest of stainless steel pillars to create a cave-like atmosphere beneath. 20 June – 6 October 2019. **serpentinegalleries.org**

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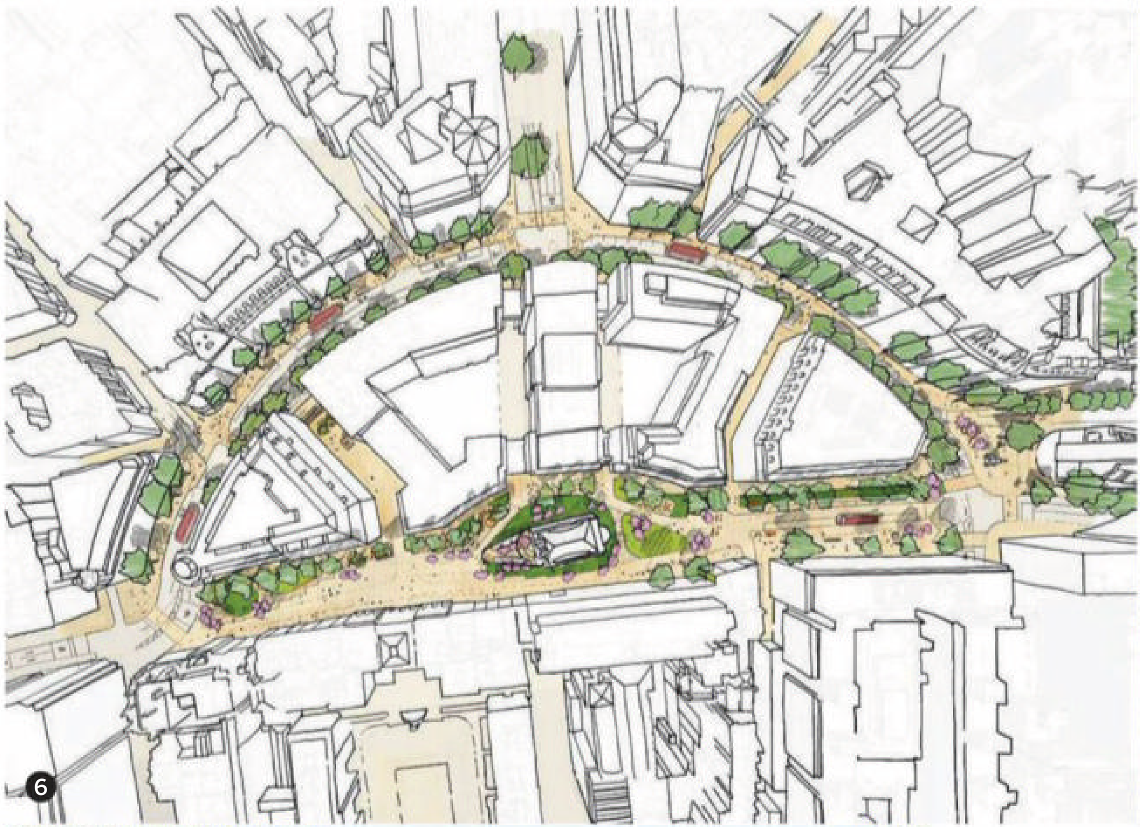
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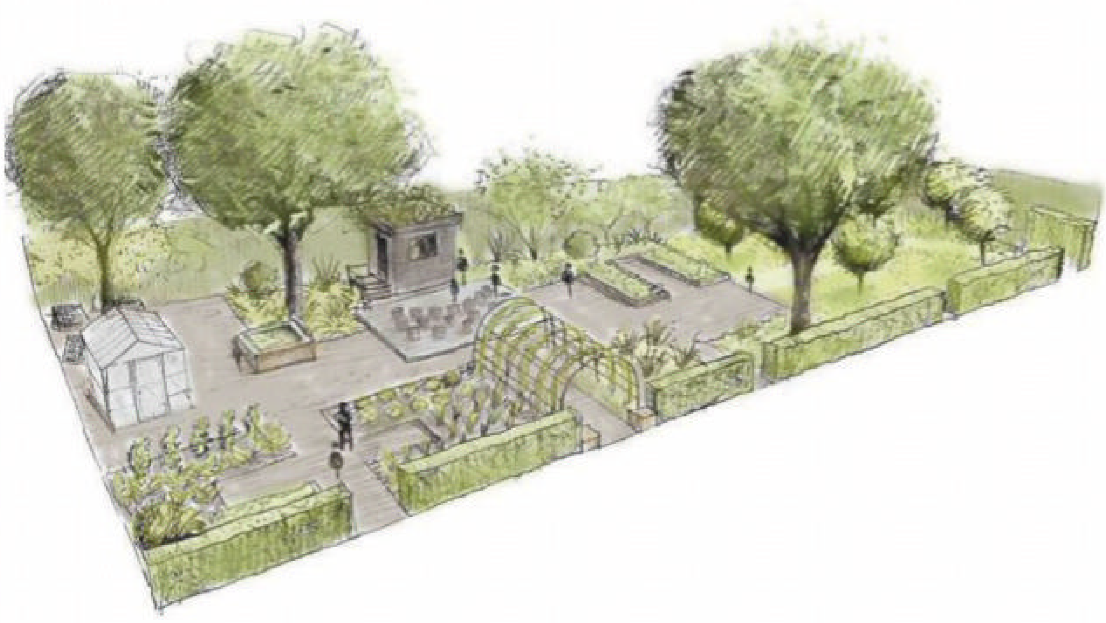
⑨

⑥ STRAND PLANS

A design concept by landscape architects LDA Design is set to transform Aldwych and the Strand in central London into a greener, less congested and polluted public space. The proposal includes a 200m pedestrianised stretch of the Strand east of the junction with Waterloo Bridge that will create a public plaza in front of Somerset House and a garden space around the historic St Mary le Strand Church. Pavements along Aldwych will be widened to allow easier pedestrian access and more seating. The area, which is also home to theatres, King's College and the LSE, is used by an estimated 14 million people a year. **lda-design.co.uk**

⑦ LEEDS CASTLE

Plans to restore the ornamental gardens at Leeds Castle, Kent have been revealed as part of celebrations to mark the castle's 900th anniversary. Originally conceived by Russell Page as a wooded dell. The 26-acre area has been renamed the Princess Alexandra Gardens and is being re-landscaped by Matt Jackson of Land and Heritage. The new scheme includes an Oriental Garden with plants from the Far East, a Jungle Garden, with bamboos, ferns and other sculptural plants, and a Winter Garden, Woodland Garden and Pavilion Garden. The new gardens should be completed by 2024. **leeds-castle.com**

⑧ HORATIO'S LONDON

Designer Tom Stuart-Smith has revealed his designs for a new Horatio's Garden, at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, in north London. Made up of two areas linked by a glazed corridor with automatic doors, the northern half will be a courtyard garden with garden pods, designed by Stephen Marshall, among birch trees and other tranquil planting, while the southern side will use hotter colours and be a more socially active space with a barbecue area and a garden room, also by Stephen Marshall, that will contain a propagation bench and mobile raised beds. Fundraising continues to allow work to begin. **horatiosgarden.org.uk**

⑨ BACK TO SCHOOL

Designer Cleve West is helping pupils of a school in south London to create a garden learning space at their school. The garden at Christ Church CofE Primary School in Wandsworth, which will also be open to the local community outside of school hours, will have fruit trees, raised beds, a pond, a wildflower and mini beast area and a greenhouse. It will also include a shed with log seating, to be designed by sculptor Johnny Woodford, that could be used as a puppet theatre. Thanks to successful crowdfunding work on the new garden starts this month with the planting of hedges to replace the existing fence. **clevewest.com**

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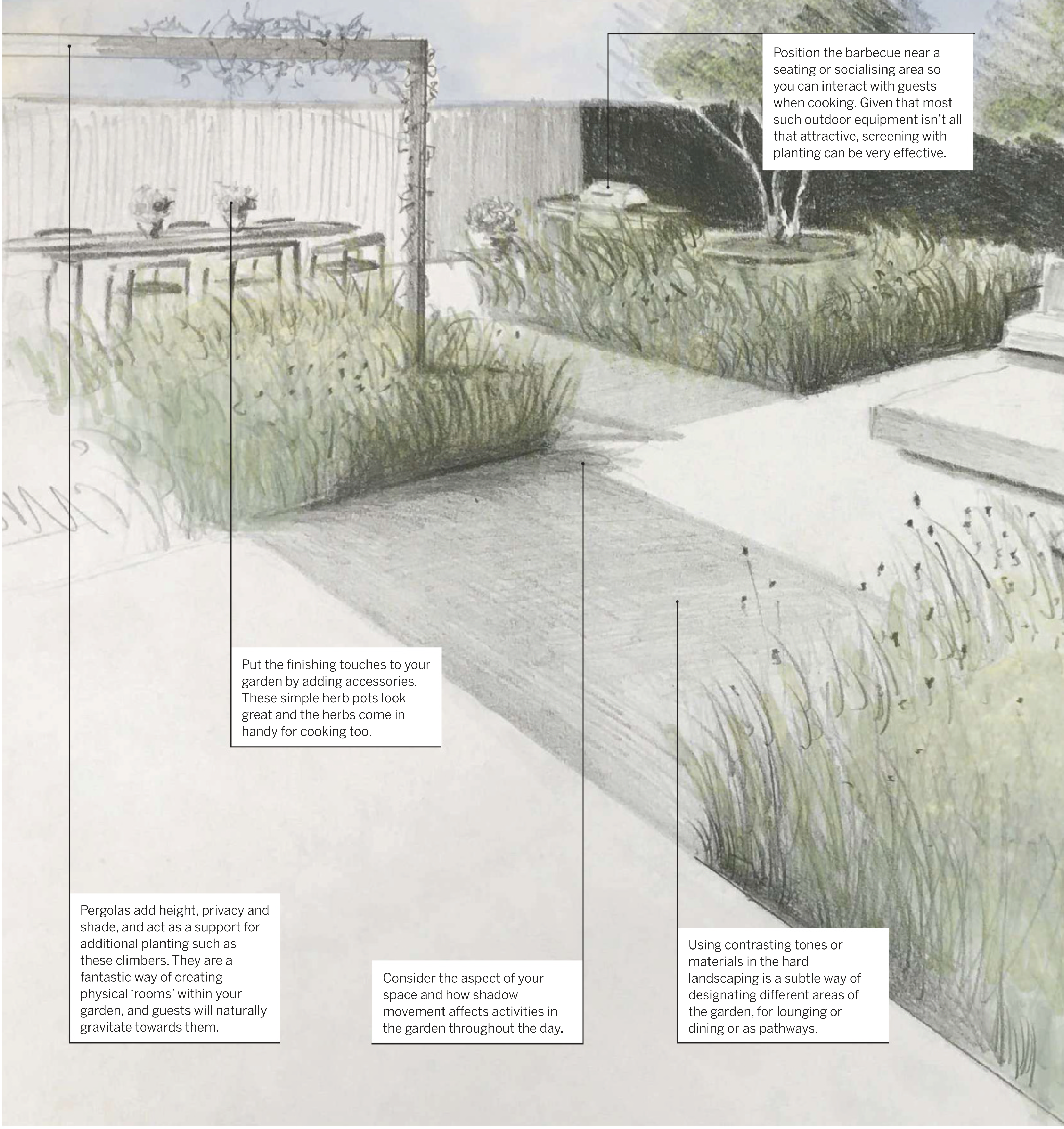
OUTDOOR LIVING

When it comes to outdoor living, plan for the life you have, not the life you wish you had, says designer Matt Keightley

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION **MATT KEIGHTLEY**



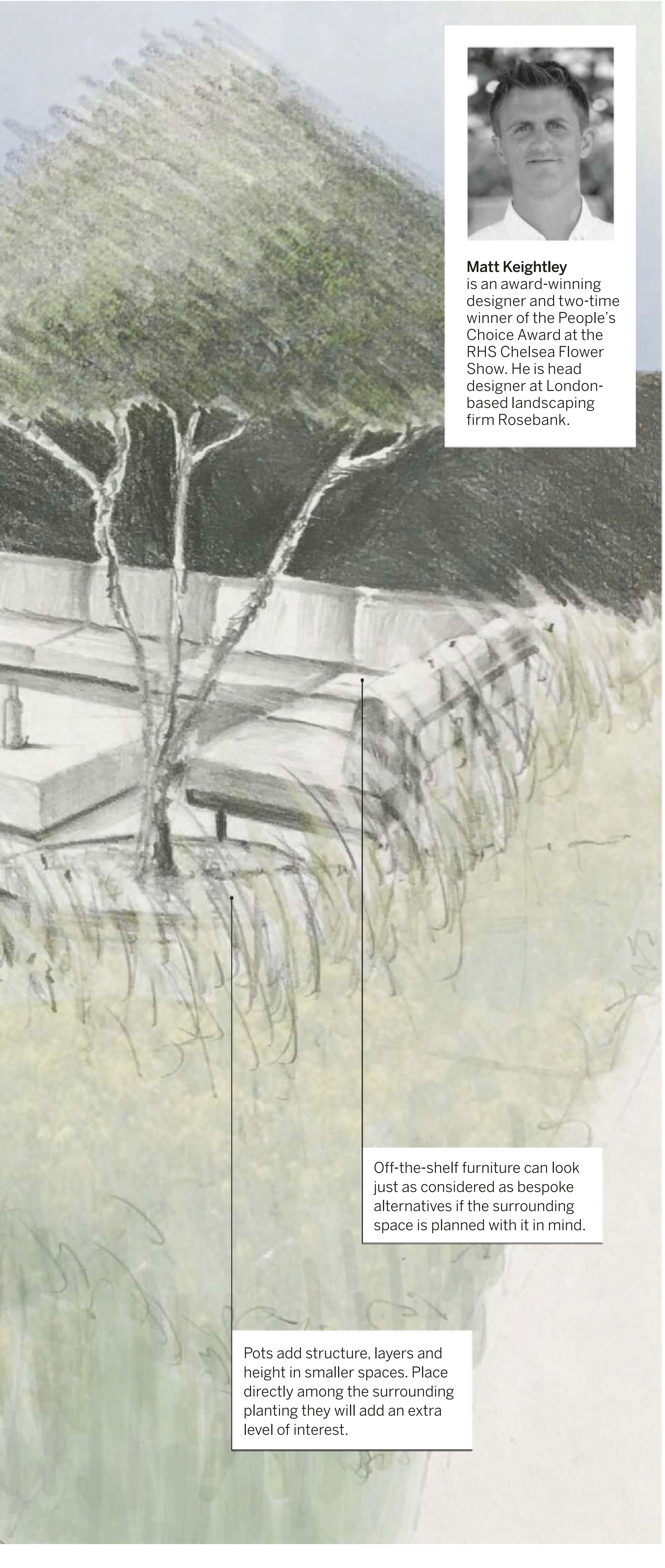
Position the barbecue near a seating or socialising area so you can interact with guests when cooking. Given that most such outdoor equipment isn't all that attractive, screening with planting can be very effective.

Put the finishing touches to your garden by adding accessories. These simple herb pots look great and the herbs come in handy for cooking too.

Pergolas add height, privacy and shade, and act as a support for additional planting such as these climbers. They are a fantastic way of creating physical 'rooms' within your garden, and guests will naturally gravitate towards them.

Consider the aspect of your space and how shadow movement affects activities in the garden throughout the day.

Using contrasting tones or materials in the hard landscaping is a subtle way of designating different areas of the garden, for lounging or dining or as pathways.



Off-the-shelf furniture can look just as considered as bespoke alternatives if the surrounding space is planned with it in mind.

Pots add structure, layers and height in smaller spaces. Place directly among the surrounding planting they will add an extra level of interest.

Matt Keightley is an award-winning designer and two-time winner of the People's Choice Award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He is head designer at London-based landscaping firm Rosebank.

AS TOLD TO JODIE JONES

Outdoor living is not only popular but essential if you want to make the most of your garden. To do it effectively, however, you need to plan for the life you have, not the life you wish you had. Be honest with yourself about what you want to get out of your garden and you are well on the way to making it happen.

The first step is to zone your garden, regardless of how small it is. My own garden is tiny, just 8m x 8m, but I have a dedicated cooking area, table and chairs, a relaxation zone and somewhere for my daughters to play – all wrapped up in masses of plants. I think it looks great and the whole family loves spending time in it.

SEGMENTED SPACE

When I visit a new client for the first time, I often find they have a terrace across the back of the house, a dilapidated lawn and not much else. My first suggestion is always to create multiple seating areas, giving them a reason to get out, explore the space and experience different aspects of their garden.

When you set out to create an outdoor room, you do need to keep the various elements in balance if it is going to look good in the end. A lot of people get carried away and fill their garden with a patchwork of lifestyle features that don't really sit well together. However high a priority you place on those outdoor living elements, you still need a well-considered planting scheme to stitch it all together.

If you have children, you'll want to create a place where they can have fun, but that doesn't mean you have to ruin the garden with plastic sandpits and slides. Entertain them and the wildlife in your garden with bug boxes, bird feeders, and maybe a pond for frogs. My own daughters – Poppy, aged four, and Sophie, who is two – have a huge terracotta pot in one corner that they use for making mud pies and potions and collecting worms. They love having water fights and drawing pictures on the terrace with giant pavement chalks. As far as they are concerned, our whole garden is one big exciting game.

> MULTIPLE SEATING AREAS GIVE PEOPLE A REASON TO EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT SPACES

If you work long hours and your garden is an adult-only space, it is more important to go for a space that you can enjoy without being a slave to it. Put in a subtle lighting scheme to extend the usable hours you can spend outside in a day, and install a table fire or fireplace to extend the number of days in the year you can enjoy being in the garden.

CHOOSING FOR COMFORT

At a minimum, every garden should have a table and chairs in it, and a pergola or shade sail is a nice way to define a seating area while providing a bit of privacy and shelter as well. As with any living space, a harmonious palette of materials and carefully considered furniture are important. In some cases, a particular piece can dictate the entire design – I've designed a whole garden around a hot tub – but your choice of furniture will always have a significant impact on the finished look, so only choose pieces you think look really good.

Since the pieces you choose will be a key component of the overall look, consider them from the outset and develop your design around them, instead of waiting until the garden is finished and then scrabbling around to find furniture that

▷

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▷ will fit into the remaining available space. There are lots of good off-the-peg options available, but if your garden is an awkward shape, it may be better to commission bespoke pieces. This allows you to achieve a streamlined look while making optimum use of the available space. Either way, take a cue from the adjoining living space. If your house is clean, contemporary and open plan, you probably want something sleek, low slung, and possibly made out of aluminium. Behind a Victorian terraced house, traditional pieces in teak or oak could be more at home.

But however much you love the look of a piece of furniture, remember it has to be comfortable if you are going to enjoy using it. I know from years of experience that 45cm is about the ideal height for the seat of a dining chair, while 40cm is better for a lounging chair, in which case you want the back to recline at an angle of about 19 degrees. The easy way to get it right is to think carefully about whether it feels good when you sit down.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The final bit of kit you need for your room outside is a barbecue. I love lighting fires so would always choose charcoal, but I am the first to admit that most pieces of kit look dreadful. They serve a purpose, but I prefer not to make them the focal point of a garden. This is a good opportunity to use an area that isn't great for sitting or for displaying plants, because aspect really doesn't matter for a cooking zone. Make sure it is positioned so that you can socialise with guests, and incorporate some simple directional downlighters so you can see what you are doing. I would always go for a bespoke barbecue area if I had the scope, so that I could build it in with harmonious materials and make full use of the space, but even an off-the-shelf unit can be integrated with its surroundings with generous planting and massed pots of growing herbs.

> **MAKE SURE ANY COOKING AREA IS SITED SO THAT YOU CAN INTERACT WITH YOUR GUESTS**

FINISHING TOUCHES

With your furniture chosen, start building the look in layers, just as you would inside. Scatter cushions are an easy way to add a splash of colour. Use lanterns to line a path or frame a flight of steps. Arrange a collection of tea lights or ornaments on the table. Such easy and inexpensive accessories will elevate the look of your garden, turning it into the outdoor living room of your dreams. ☐

Matt's recommended furniture suppliers

Archiproducts
archiproducts.com
Brings together lots of different online suppliers, some of which show prices and others which direct you to the manufacturer for further information
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Manutti
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Royal Botania
Tel +32 (0)3 411 22 85, royalbotania.com
Viteo
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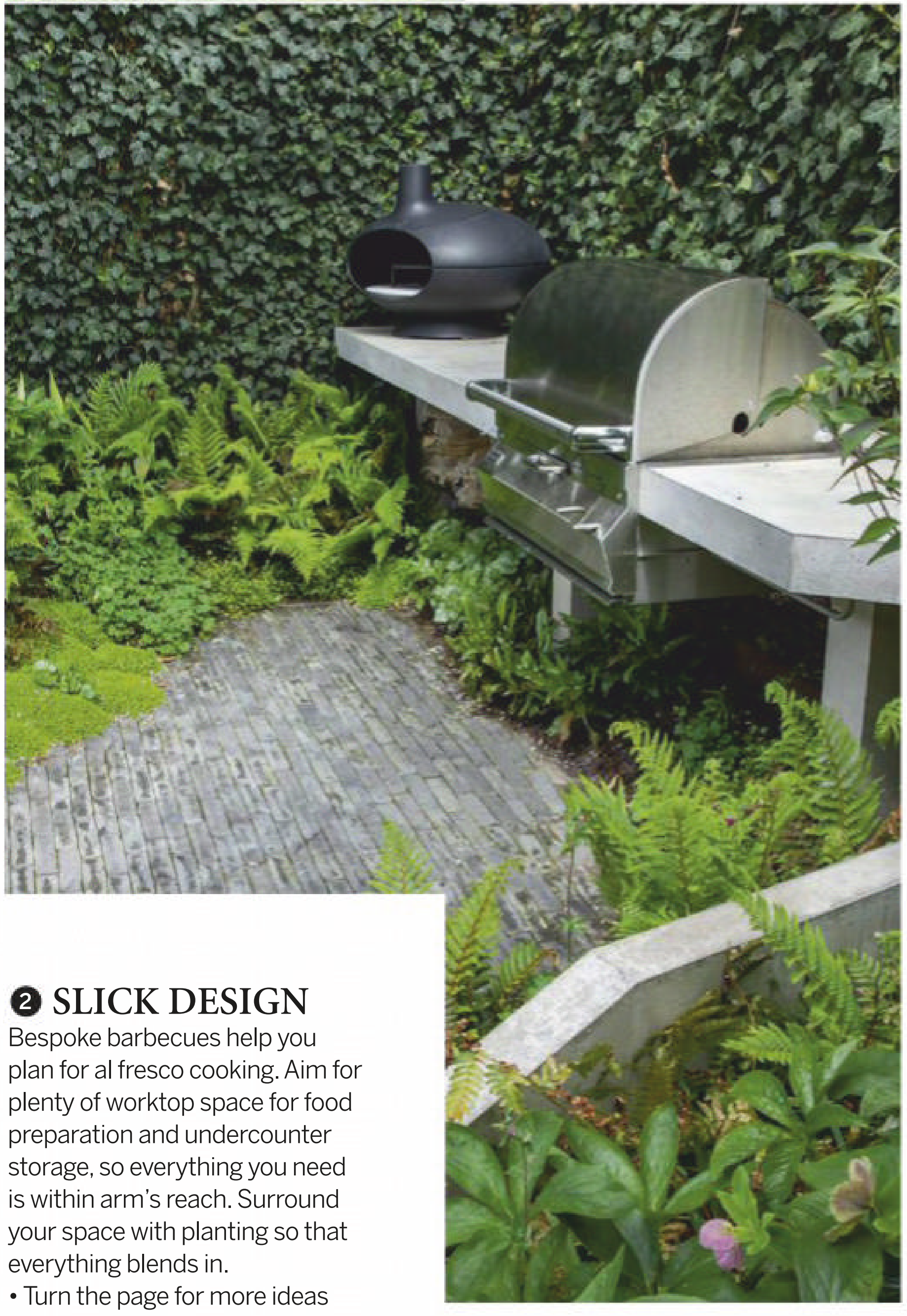
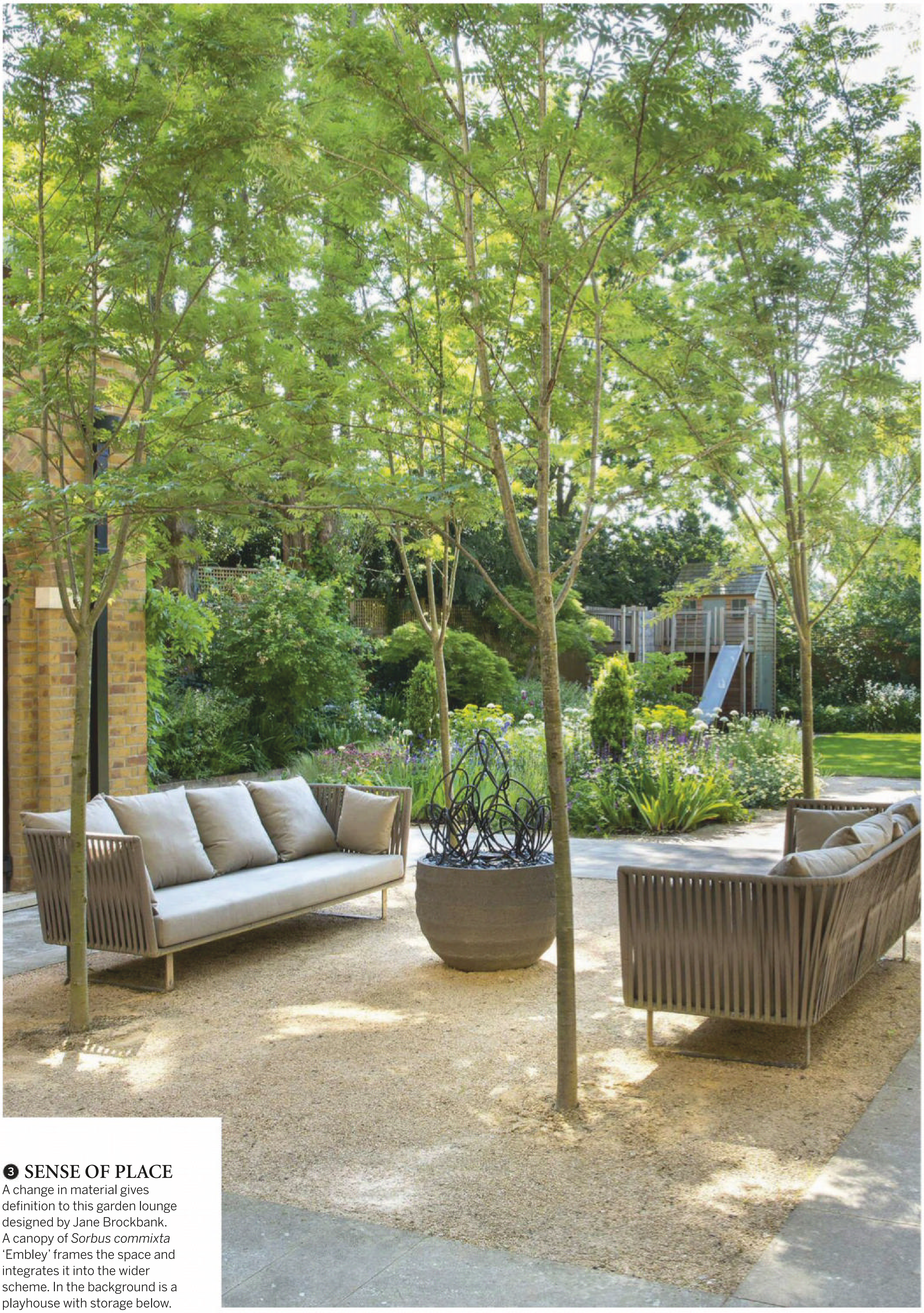
❶ COOL AND CALM
Accessorising can make for a truly inviting environment. In this James Fox design, layers are built through pots, lanterns and finally a shade sail. Acers wrap around the stone patio to complete the effect.



❷ SLICK DESIGN
Bespoke barbecues help you plan for al fresco cooking. Aim for plenty of worktop space for food preparation and undercounter storage, so everything you need is within arm's reach. Surround your space with planting so that everything blends in.
- Turn the page for more ideas

1 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN JAMES FOX; 2 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN MATT KEIGHTLEY.



③ SENSE OF PLACE

A change in material gives definition to this garden lounge designed by Jane Brockbank. A canopy of *Sorbus commixta* 'Embley' frames the space and integrates it into the wider scheme. In the background is a playhouse with storage below.

3 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN JANE BROCKBANK

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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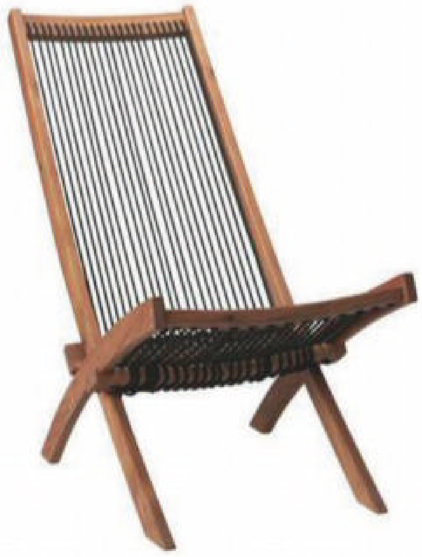
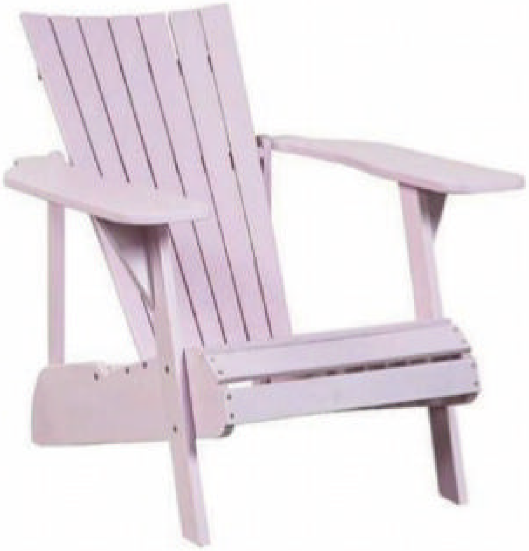
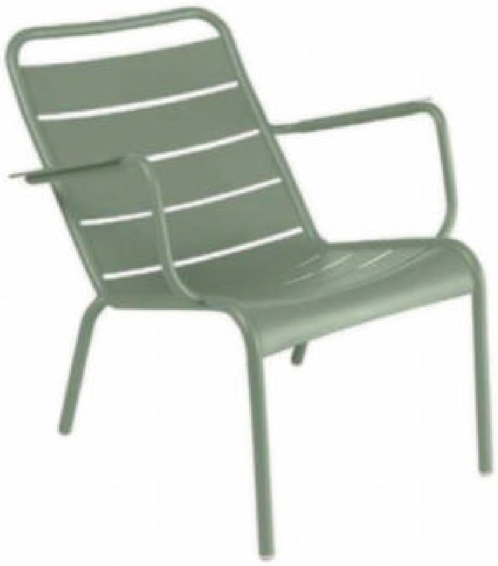


NO ARMS
Brommö Lounger,
£39, IKEA,
020 3645 0000, ikea.com



WIDE ARMS
Fred in powder pink,
€129, Lanterfant,
+31 (0)88 6262 380, lanterfant.eu



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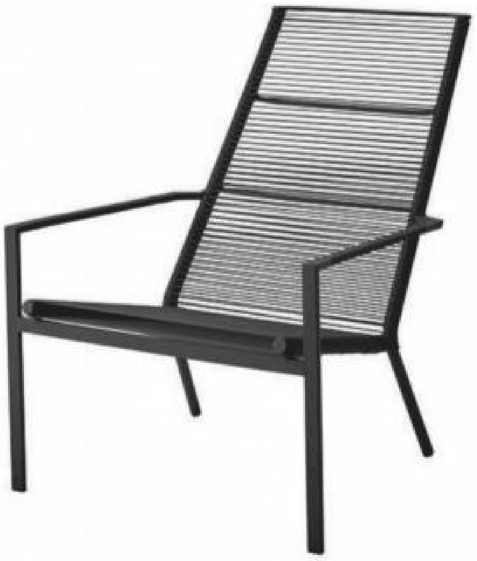
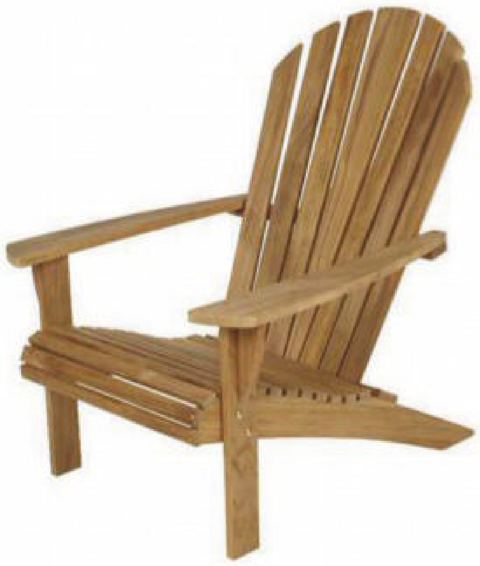
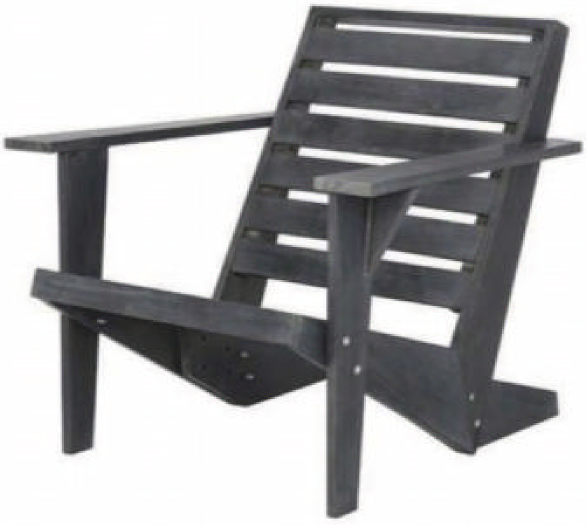
Luxembourg Low Armchair in cactus,
£399, Fermob,
020 8878 1994, barbed.co.uk



CONTEMPORARY
Edge Highback Chair,
£865, Cane-Line,
020 7590 0030, skandium.com



CLASSIC
Adirondack Armchair,
£670, Barlow Tyrie,
020 7352 5656, chelseagardener.com



MODERN UPDATE
Karl Garden Chair in dark slate grey,
£249.99, Lynton Garden,
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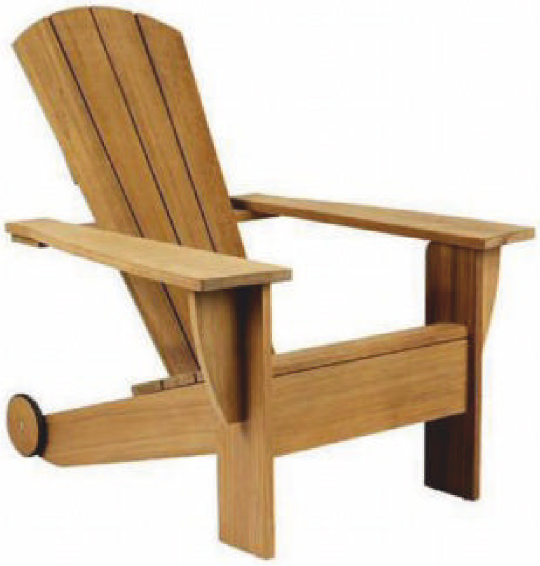
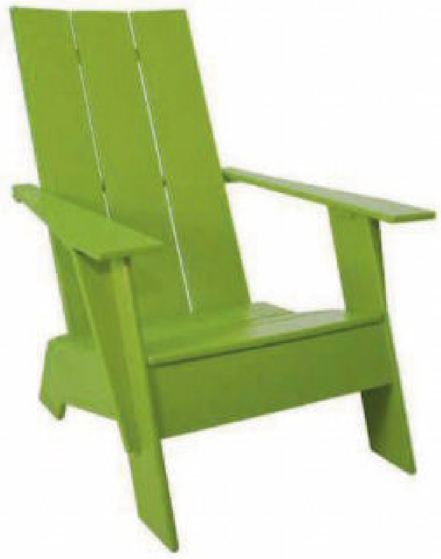


ON WHEELS
New England Lounge Chair,
€1,388 (price including wheels), Royal Botania,
+32 (0)3 411 22 85, royalbotania.com



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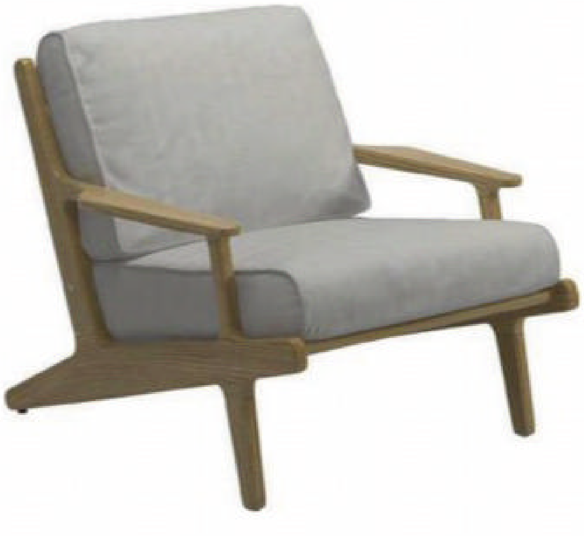
Loll Adirondack Lounge Chair in leaf green,
£575.99, Envirobuild,
020 8031 2637, envirobuild.com



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Bay Lounge Chair in seagull,
£2,300, Gloster,
0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk

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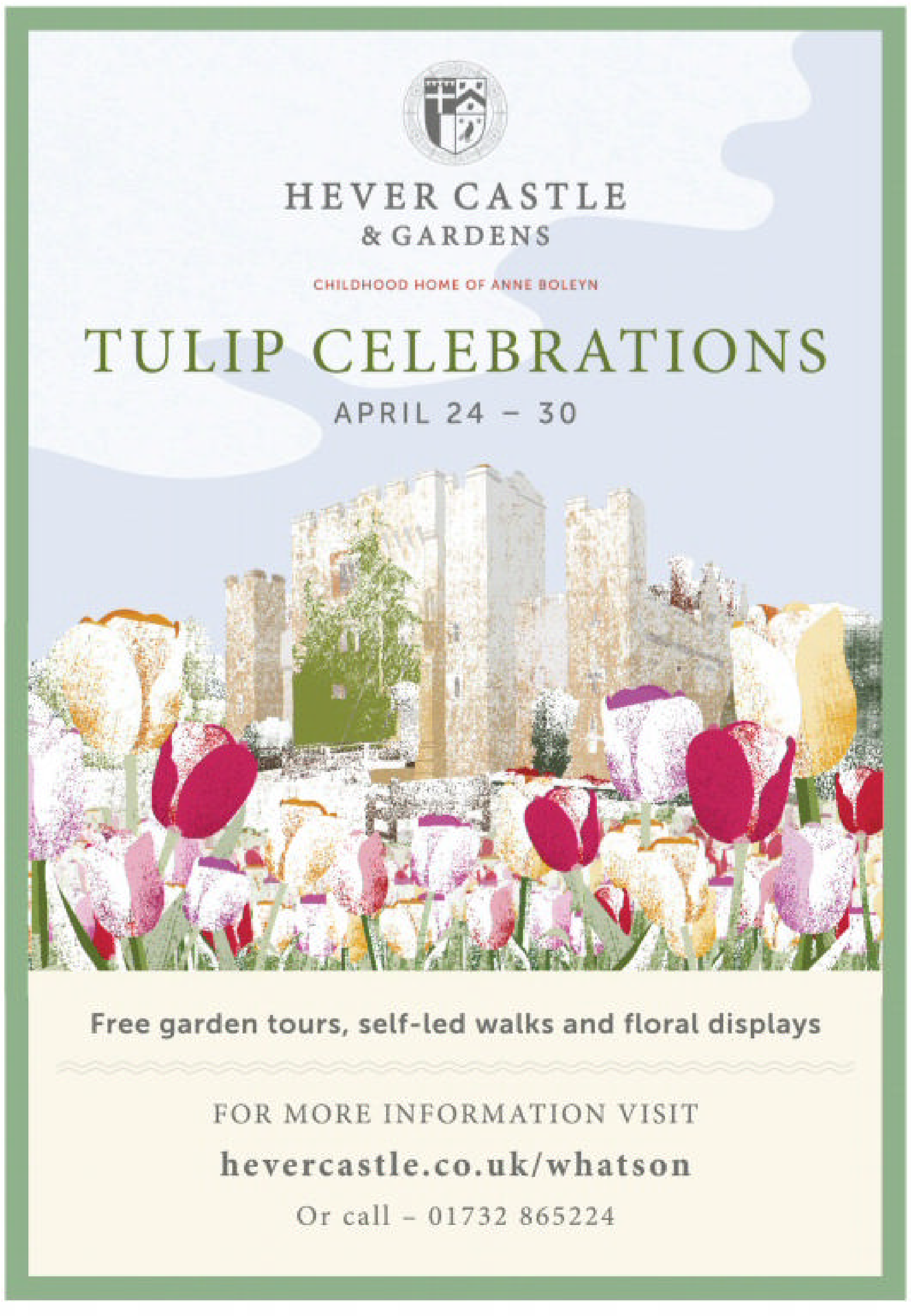

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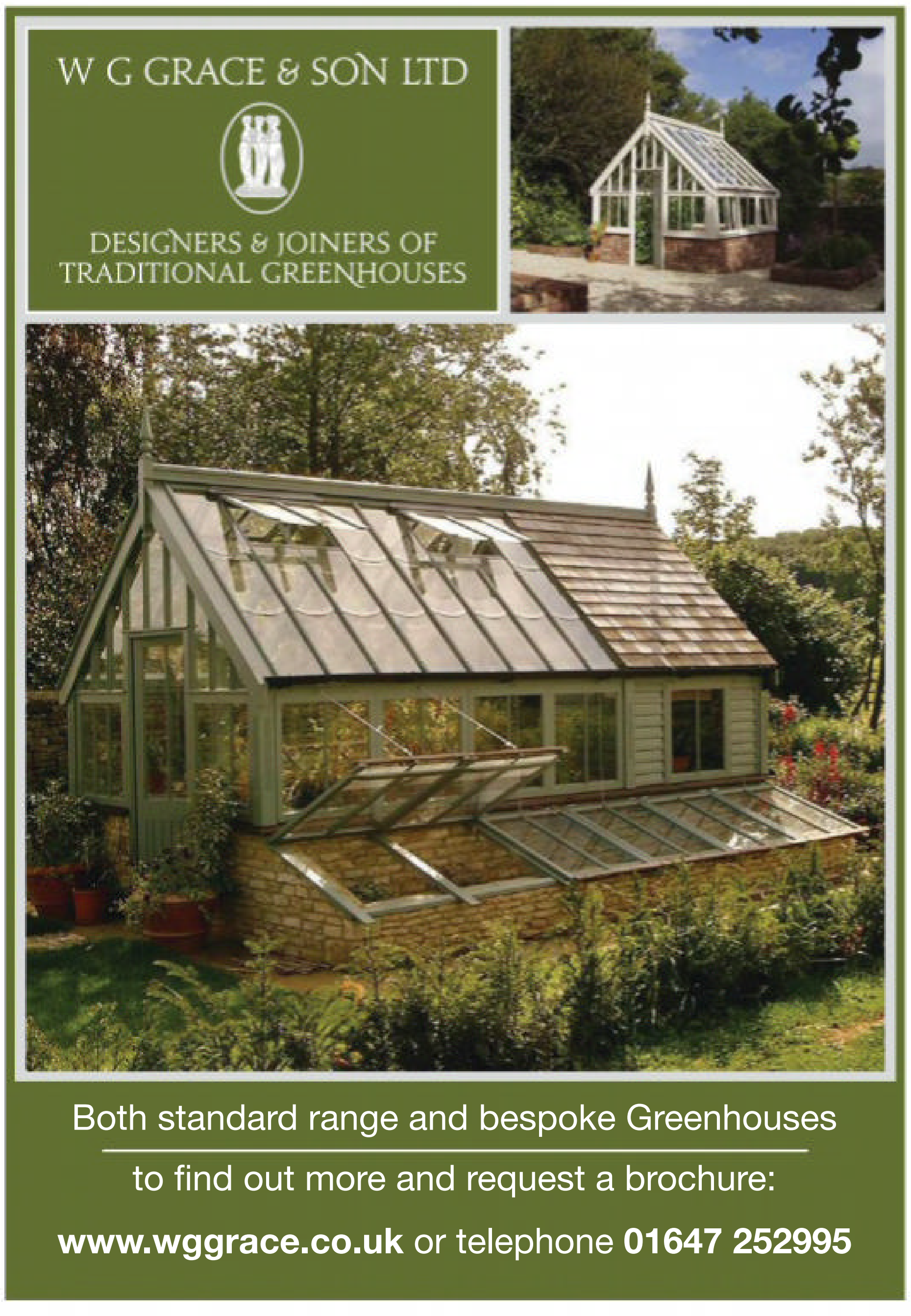

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DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, reader offer, crossword, back issues

The naturalistic planting at The Barbican in London is one of many designs featured in Nigel Dunnett's new book *Naturalistic Planting Design*. Read the review on page 113.

NIGEL DUNNETT

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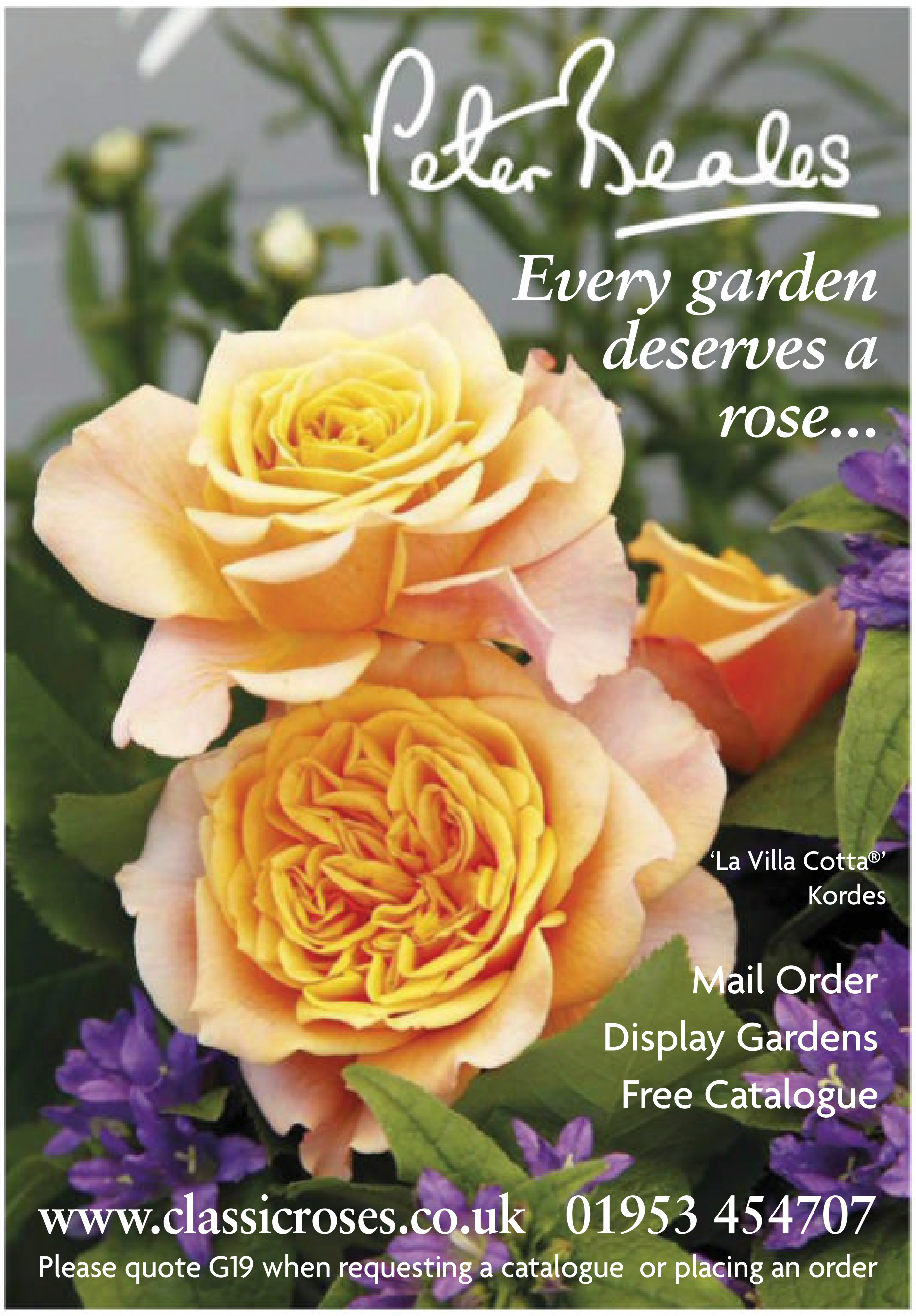
Peter Beales

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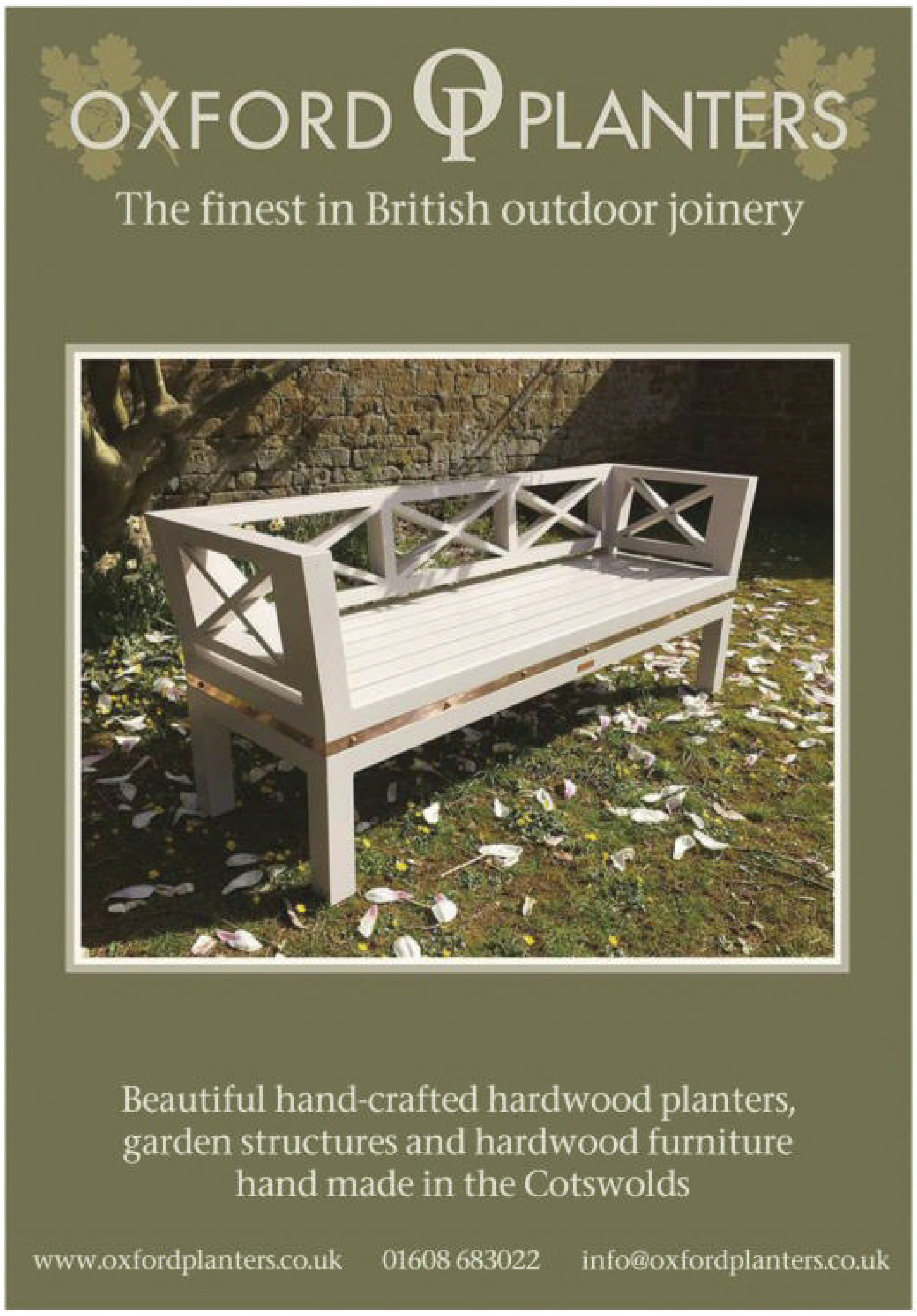
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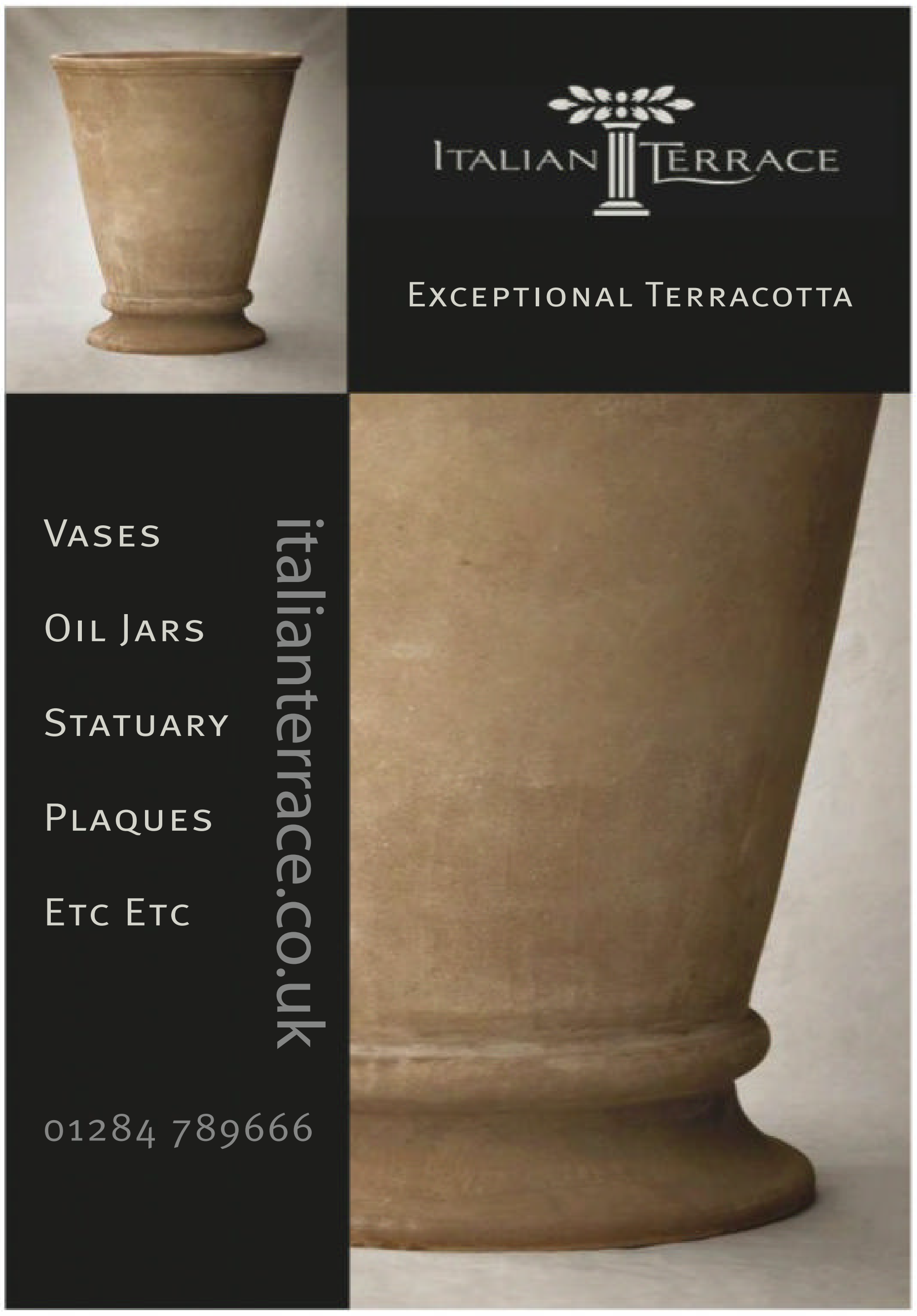
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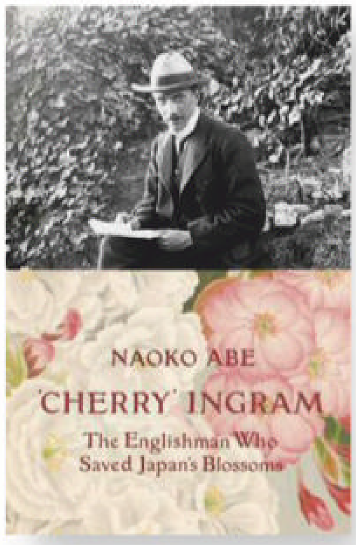
BOOK REVIEWS



'CHERRY' INGRAM: THE ENGLISHMAN WHO SAVED JAPAN'S BLOSSOMS

by Naoko Abe

Chatto & Windus, £16.99
ISBN 978-1784742027

Part biography, part monogram, part cultural history of the turbulent relationship between Britain and Japan through the 20th century.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

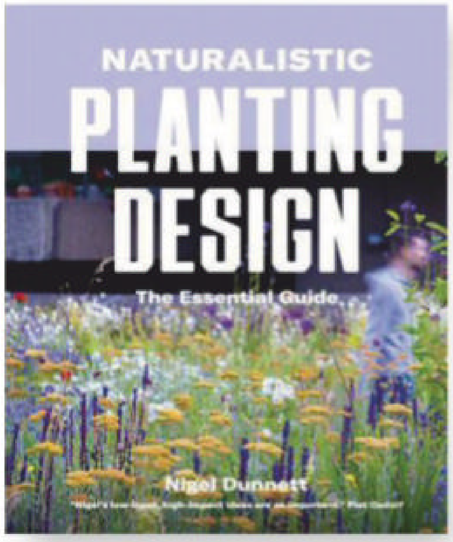
Japanese political journalist Naoko Abe came across the story of cherry-tree expert Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram while researching a newspaper column. She became entranced by the story of an amateur enthusiast renowned among Western horticulturists as the man who saved many cultivars of Japanese cherry from extinction, while remaining virtually unknown in Japan.

She paints a picture of a man born into privilege and eccentricity, who pursued his hobbies with passion. His first love was birdwatching, until he concluded that there were no great discoveries left to be made in the world of ornithology. Instead, he wrote, 'I chose plants.'

This decision coincided with his purchase of a house in Benenden, in Kent, with two fine, flowering cherries in its grounds. At a time when ornamental cherries were rare in England, Ingram decided to collect as many different cultivars as he could, and become a globally recognised cherry-blossom expert.

Alongside this narrative, Abe explores the Imperial history of Japan's cherry-blossom culture, and the darker period in the Second World War when the cherry-blossom ideology was perverted to 'glorify and beautify the [*kamikaze*] pilots' deaths'. She writes unflinchingly about the atrocities perpetrated in Japanese prisoner of war camps, the retrospective shame of her nation, and the urge to forge some sort of reconciliation for all parties.

Three years after the war, Ingram published *Ornamental Cherries*, which immediately became the definitive English-language guide. In retelling his story from her own cultural perspective, Abe has produced an engaging work that adds illuminating definition to the world about which he wrote.



NATURALISTIC PLANTING DESIGN: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

by Nigel Dunnett

Filbert Press, £35
ISBN 978-0993389269

A thoughtful and detailed exploration of some of the key concepts that have guided the author's career in planting design.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

The field of naturalistic planting design, inherently a somewhat paradoxical endeavour, is beset with bewildering quantities of technical information and competing theories. The paradox is that the more unstudied and 'natural' we wish a planting to appear, the more fiendishly cunning and convoluted are the contrivances required to plan it. There can be no one better placed than the author of this book to offer a summary of current naturalistic approaches to working with plants – Nigel Dunnett has been an integral part of the recent reinvigoration of the field, which gathered pace in the 1990s and shows no sign of abating.

In such a complex area, the allure of adopting a dogma to simplify matters is strong. But Dunnett's approach is refreshingly catholic and thoughtful. He identifies three main strands in contemporary naturalistic design, which he terms 'impressionistic', 'modernistic' and 'technocratic'. In his design work he combines the best elements of all of these and because of this, the book offers both a broad summary of the current state of naturalistic design as well as a generous account of his own methods.

Dunnett trained as an ecologist and his insights are informed by a lifelong study of semi-wild plant communities. The book is generously illustrated by his own stunning photos, complemented by pictures of projects new and old that elucidate how his design principles have been put into practice. While not oversimplifying matters, this book makes an arcane and often misunderstood field of knowledge accessible to all and should be considered indispensable to anyone with an interest in current gardening trends.

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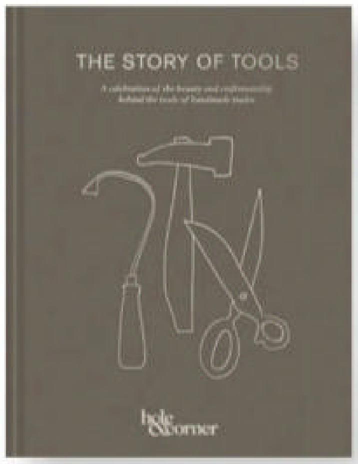


THE STORY OF TOOLS
Hole & Corner

Pavilion Books, £20
ISBN 978-1911595700

An exploration of the beauty and meaning of tools told through the stories of those whose livelihoods and craft depend on them.

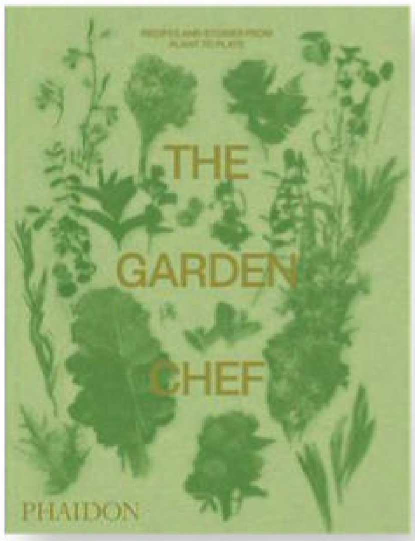
Reviewer Natasha Goodfellow is a freelance writer.

Hole & Corner is an independent magazine that tells the stories of people who make and do, be they glass blowers or ceramicists, wood turners or foragers. This book goes a step further, celebrating the tools that shape their owners' work, ideas and lives.

The 25 tool-focused chapters run the gamut from Swedish chisels, as used by Sean Sutcliffe of furniture maker Benchmark, to the vintage leather hammer Bill Amberg acquired from his father's old cobbler when he was starting out in the leather trade. Gardeners may well be most interested in the horticultural tools featured: Fergus Garrett's long-handled tickling fork, used to work-in compost between the plants in the deep borders at Great Dixter; Troy Scott Smith's multi-purpose onion hoe; or the stainless steel widger used by Emma Davies of the Walled Nursery in Kent to transplant seedlings.

There are more unexpected entries too. I was fascinated by the *ulu* – a handled blade traditionally used by the Inuit for skinning animals and cleaning their hides – and the Victorian bone crochet hooks and bits of whalebone corsetry used by animator Jim Parkyn to create such icons as Wallace and Gromit.

With such creative interviewees and visual subject matter, the photography is disappointingly sparse – I would have liked to see more of the makers' environments and the results of their labours. But this is a minor quibble. For makers and those who understand the joy of working with a well-made tool, this is a fascinating read. As blacksmith and axe aficionado Alex Pole says, 'It's a lovely feeling to be going out into an orchard with an axe you've forged yourself. I could have chainsawed the tree of course, but with a chainsaw you can't talk to anyone.'



THE GARDEN CHEF: RECIPES AND STORIES FROM PLANT TO PLATE
Phaidon Editors

Phaidon, £29.95
ISBN 978-0714878225

A fascinating insight into the gastronomic gardens of the world's leading restaurants and their chefs' plant-to-plate philosophies.

Reviewer Alys Hurn is staff writer at Gardens Illustrated.

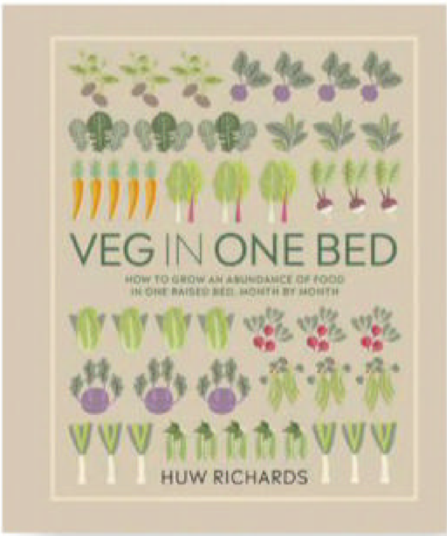
In *The Garden Chef* , Phaidon has put together a stunning showcase of the gardens of the world's leading restaurants. The book includes 40 gardens in which the growing methods and site conditions range from John Mooney's aeroponic rooftop garden at Bell Book & Candle in New York to Skye Gyngell's biodynamic farming practices at Heckfield Place in Hampshire. Mauro Colagreco on the Côte d'Azur in France grows in a labyrinth of hilltop terraces with a tropical microclimate at Mirazur, while Gísli Matthías Auounsson at Slippurinn, on the volcanic island of Strandvegur in Iceland, has to contend with salty air and high winds from the Atlantic Ocean.

The variation is immense but what connects each chef is an obsessive determination to achieve his or her dream relationship between garden and kitchen, be that creating a garden that is self-sufficient, growing forgotten cultivars or forging new relationships with communities through the power of food.

Each restaurant is given six pages and the story of the garden is narrated by the chef. Gardening notes highlight favourite plants or cultivating tips, and two or three signature recipes end each section.

There are more than 80 recipes, ranging from beautifully simple plates to mind-blowingly complex dishes with ingredients that require a quick Google for clarification. Tiger milk? Not what you think. It's a Peruvian citrus-based marinade used to cure seafood in ceviche.

Rich in inspiration for gardeners looking for unusual edibles to grow, the pages contain a wealth of horticultural knowledge, especially with regard to soil health. Every chef touches on it, revealing another layer of dedication to growing the very best produce.


VEG IN ONE BED
HOW TO GROW AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD IN ONE RAISED BED, MONTH BY MONTH
HUW RICHARDS

VEG IN ONE BED
by Huw Richards

DK, £14.99
ISBN 978-0241376522

This highly practical, month-by-month guide to growing vegetables will appeal to beginner kitchen gardeners or anyone with limited space.

Reviewer Anna Greenland is an organic grower and consultant.

For beginner growers, knowing where to start can be daunting. This is not a book that requires green fingers – Huw Richards knows his onions and provides a foolproof plan of how to produce 19 different vegetable crops from a 3 x 1.2m bed in one season.

There is a real sense that Richards is a hands-on gardener with tried-and-tested methods. This is not a book for the coffee table, but a blueprint to follow as the months unfold. I suspect it will become muddy and wet as you take it outside to follow his advice.

Monthly sections provide practical advice on filling your bed, illustrated through simple diagrams and photography of Richards in action. There are instructions on how to build raised beds and compost bins, and create biodegradable plant pots. And he explains terminology such as 'drill' and 'chitting' that can seem entirely foreign to new gardeners.

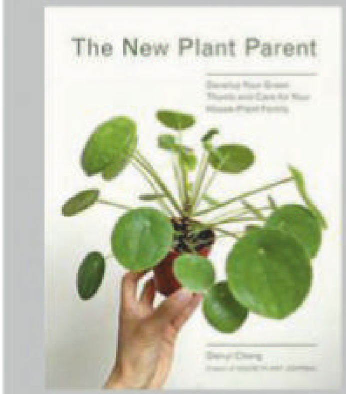
The windowsill plays a key role in this book as a space to germinate seedlings – great for those with no greenhouse, but it can be a tricky business of leggy plants and repetitive tray turning. Still, Richards offers advice on how to get the best out of it, and there's a similarly handy section on container veg for small-space growers.

At the age of 12, Richards created a YouTube channel about growing vegetables and has gained a huge following ever since. He is someone who can engage a new audience and this book makes growing your own feel achievable, no matter what your experience.

But although the book lays things out in simple terms, let's not underestimate the skill involved. Sometimes smaller spaces are more complex to plan as you aim for bountiful harvests from little ground. Richards has done the hard part so you can enjoy the growing.

Other books

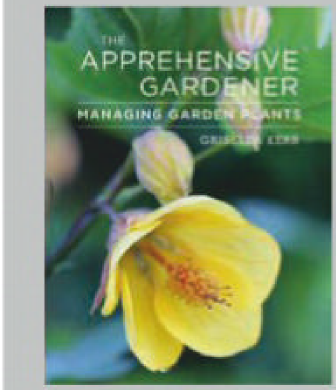
Four new titles to add a touch of the outdoors to your interior design, and a guide to growing common garden plants.



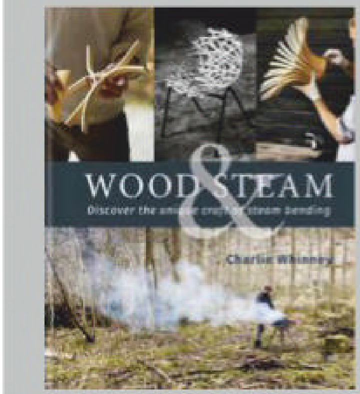
THE NEW PLANT PARENT
by Darryl Cheng
Abrams & Chronicle Books, £17.99
ISBN 978-1419732393
A book on the basics of growing houseplants from the creator of Instagram account @houseplantjournal.

A Tree in the House

A TREE IN THE HOUSE
by Annabelle Hickson
Hardie Grant Books, £25
ISBN 978-1743793749
Learn how to tune in to the seasons and create beautiful floral arrangements using foraged plants and locally sourced materials.



THE APPREHENSIVE GARDENER: MANAGING GARDEN PLANTS
by Griselda Kerr
Pimpernel Press, £16.99
ISBN 978-1910258231
A comprehensive, practical guide to growing and managing garden plants.



WOOD & STEAM
by Charlie Whinney, photographs by Andrew Montgomery
Kyle Books, £20
ISBN 978-0857835109
An introduction to the craft of steam bending wood and DIY projects to try at home.

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by Joanna Maclennan and Oliver Maclennan
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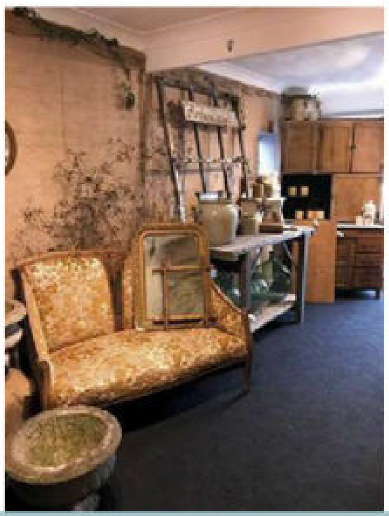

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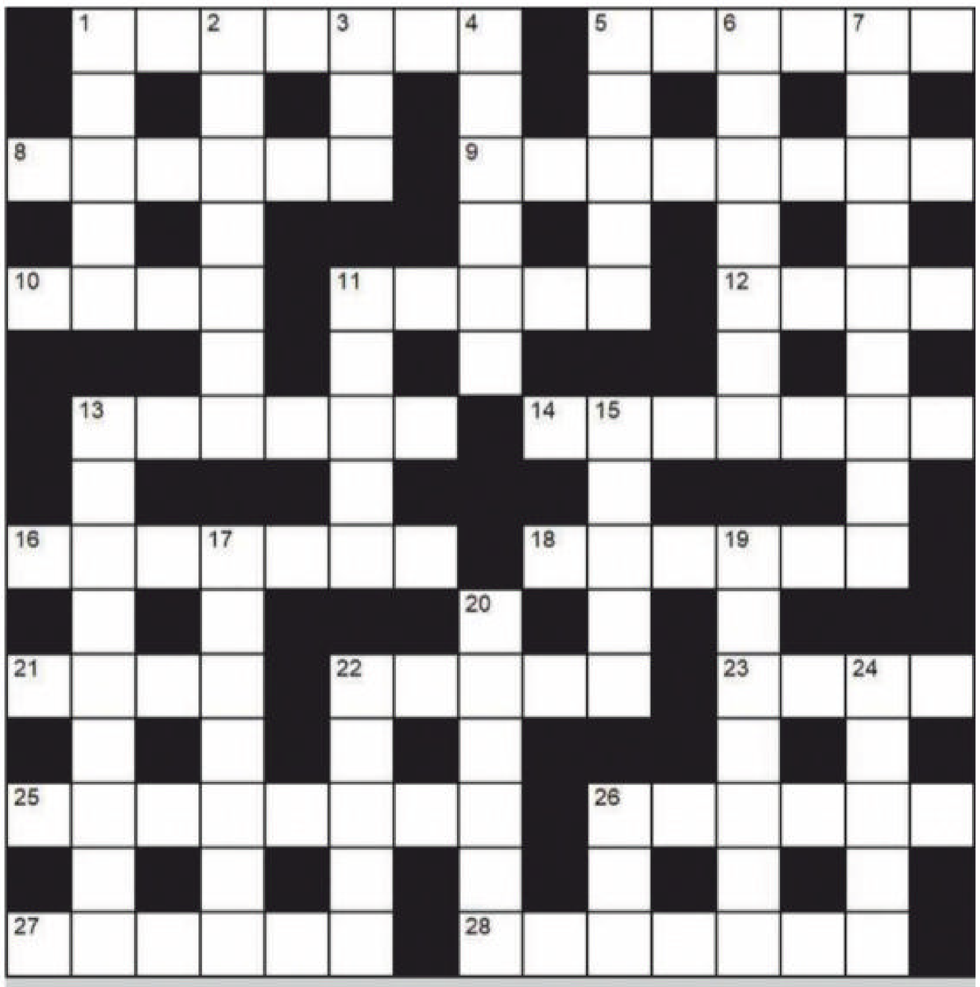
Crossword



ACROSS

1 The devil of a canna with yellow-edged red flowers! (7)

5 Yellow-lemon bearded iris hidden by trim escallonia (6)

8 Borneo modified this miniature canna with cupped orange flowers (6)

9 Genus of honeywort plants – the nicer sort! (8)

10 To let eg medlars decay before cooking – some edible types (4)

11 Tree in Fagaceae family – said to be a seaside feature (5)

12 Environment includes a mineral found in eg spinach (4)

13 Large, red, double-flowered peony named after US state (6)

14 Acer with vivid autumn colours – which rejuvenates from ashes? (7)

16 A pulmonaria with very pale pink/blue flowers, 'Gracile' perhaps (7)

18 Royal colour of a sprouting broccoli (6)

21 Sooty fungal disease of plants? That's rather blue! (4)

22 A violet pink *Gladiolus* to delight (5)

23 Fruit of 11 across found on a sailing ship? (4)

25 See 3 down

26 Small container for fruit… from homespun netting (6)

27 Genus of woad, as it is rewritten (6)

28 Edible part of a turnip (7)

DOWN

1 It helps identify part of *Primula auricula* 'Bella' (5)

2 Large-cupped, yellow narcissus – can rot badly, left inside (7)

3/25 Growing fruit on a wall or fence, alternative to espalier method (3,8)

4 See 24 down

5 One of *Viola odorata*'s common names… and when its seedlings emerge (5)

6 Flag lily cultivar with salmon-pink flowers – 'Break of day' (7)

7 Pure-white sweet pea, sadly atrophied (9)

11 Flat part of a leaf (5)

13 Irma likes new genus of plants in the sunflower family (9)

15 Potato plant's leaves and stems (5)

17 Labiate plant of *Nepeta* genus, attractive to feline (7)

19 Point me out *Capsicum annuum* aka cherry pepper (7)

20 Fonteyn's first red-yellow bicolor helenium cultivar (6)

22 Causes seed potatoes to sprout (5)

24/4 Common name of *Hesperis matronalis* – we stock tree variety (5,6)

26 Fleshy fruit seed initially planted in pots (3)

Solutions to this month's crossword will be printed next month

SOLUTIONS TO MARCH'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 6 Campanula **8** Lilac **10** Shoot **11** Magic **12** Eve **13** Ash-keys **14** Everest **16** Daisies **18** Freesia **20** Timothy **22** Cats ear **24** Urn **26** Rocks **27** Split **28** Kendo **29** Anagallis.

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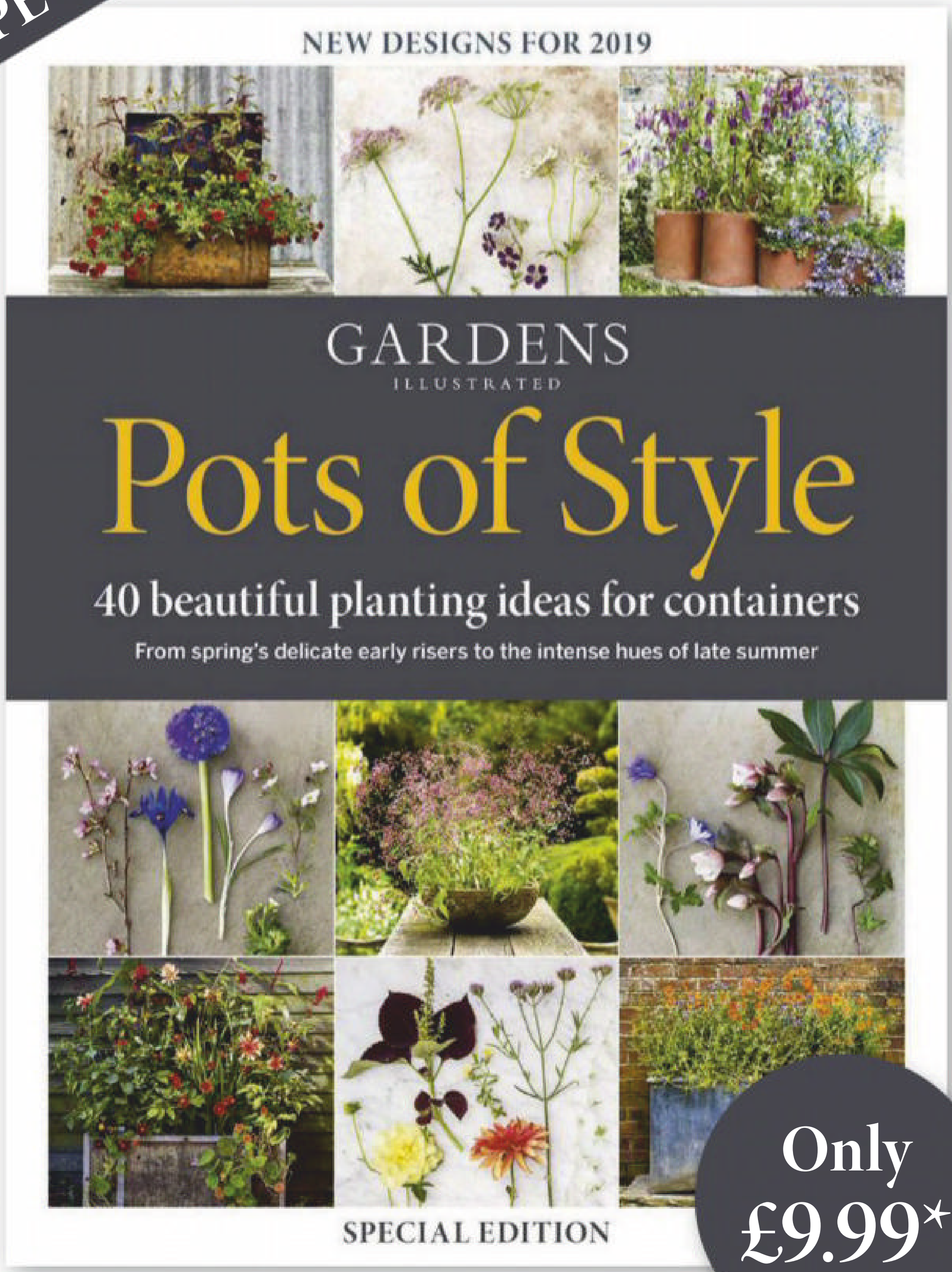
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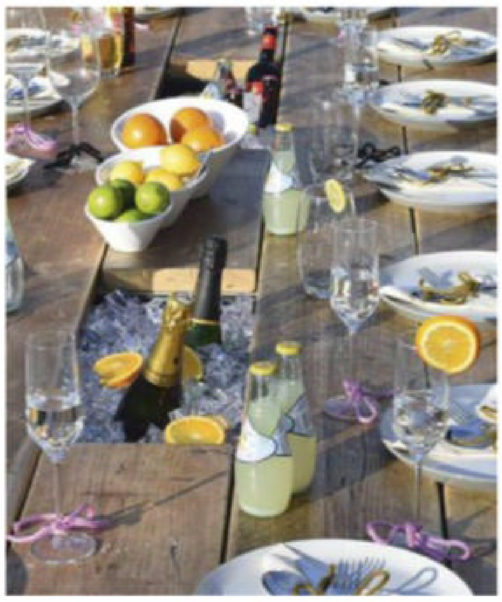

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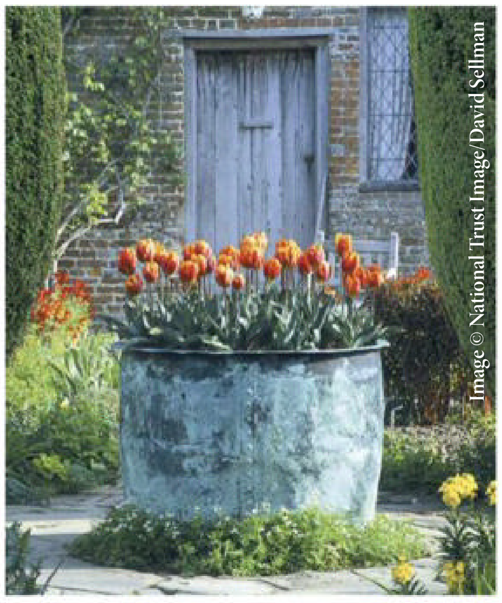

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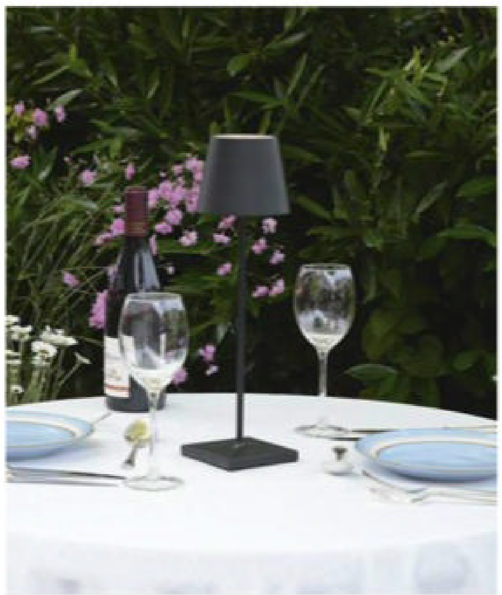

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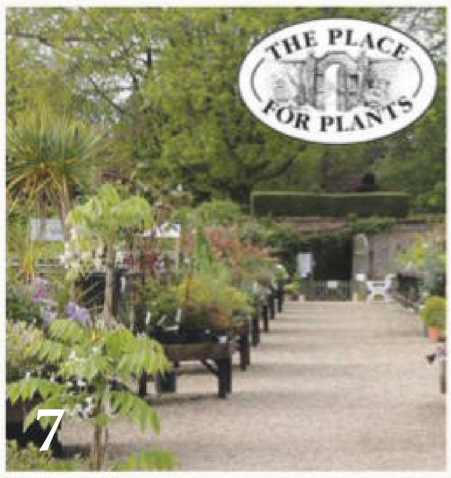

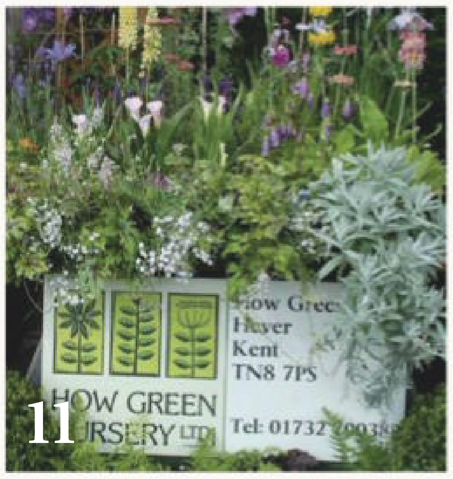

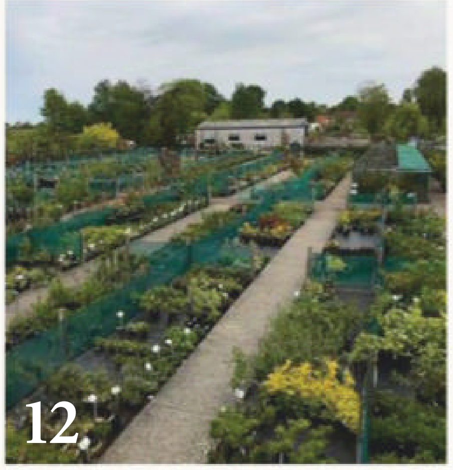

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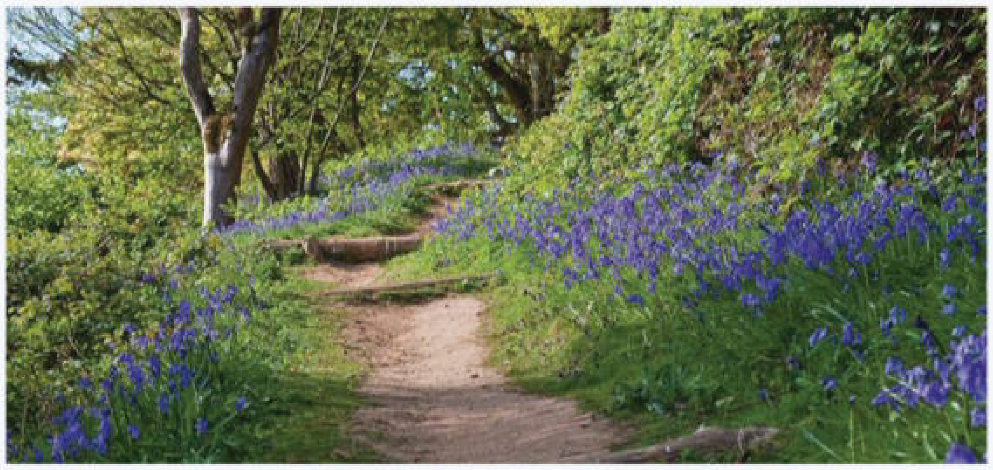

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Winkworth Arboretum's woodland in late April is a haze of bluebells, creating a truly unforgettable display. For the best views, follow the Spring Walk and you'll head right into the Bluebell Wood, where the most spectacular swathe of flowers awaits.

nationaltrust.org.uk/winkworth-arboretum | 01483 208477

2 WAKEHURST

Kew's wild botanic garden in Sussex, home to over 500 acres of ornamental gardens, temperate woodlands and a nature reserve. Swathes of native bluebells carpet the woodlands from April with a rich blue hue and gentle perfume.

kew.org/wakehurst | 01444 894066

3 THE NATIONAL TRUST'S CLIVEDEN ESTATE

Visit Cliveden's ancient woodland and be surrounded by a beautiful bluebell bounty within. Follow the bluebell walk to take you on a journey of cowslips, snowy wood anemones and dog violets, carefully maintained by the National Trust ranger team. Collect a bluebell walk leaflet from the Information Centre.

nationaltrust.org.uk/cliveden | 01628 605069

4 HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Follow a woodland path in the grounds of Hever Castle, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, and enjoy fabulous bluebell displays and blankets of these delicate flowers in the woodland not usually open to visitors. See website for opening dates. Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG.

hevercastle.co.uk | 01732 865224

5 HOLE PARK ESTATE

Hole Park is renowned as one of the very best places to see natural English bluebells during its Bluebell Spectacular from 15 April to 10 May. Visitors can check the bluebell barometer on the website to ensure they see these flowers at their best. Gardens open 30 March. 11am-6pm. Dogs welcome for 2019 season.

holepark.com | 01580 241344

Spring gardens to visit

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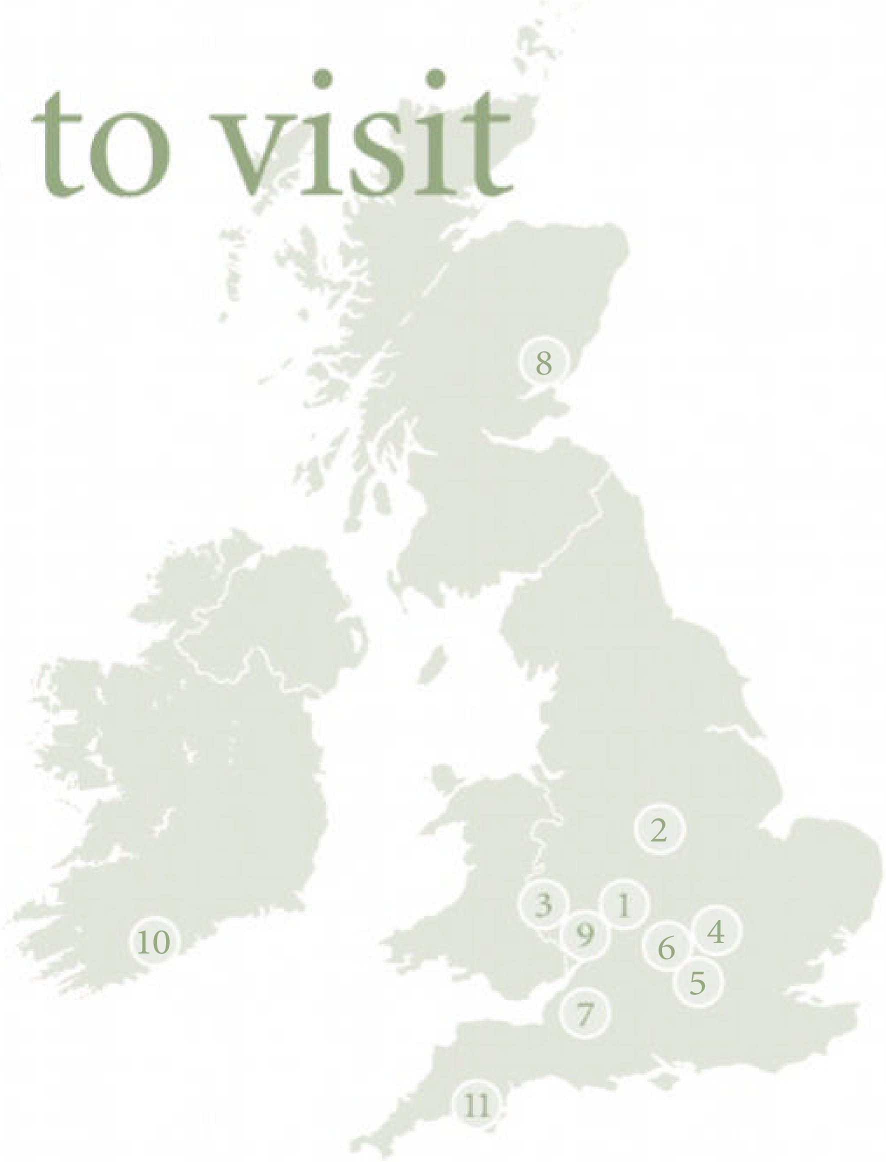

Clive Nichols

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Worcestershire B96 6SJ | 01386 791820 | mortonhallgardens.co.uk

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Ashby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com

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4 THE SWISS GARDEN AT SHUTTLEWORTH

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Old Warden, Beds SG18 9EP | 01767 627927 | shuttleworth.org/swissgarden

5 CHENIES MANOR

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Chenies, Bucks WD3 6EP | 01494 762888 | cheniesmanorhouse.co.uk

6 WATERPERRY GARDENS

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Glamis, Angus DD8 1RJ | 01307 840393 | glamis-castle.co.uk

9 SPETCHLEY PARK GARDENS

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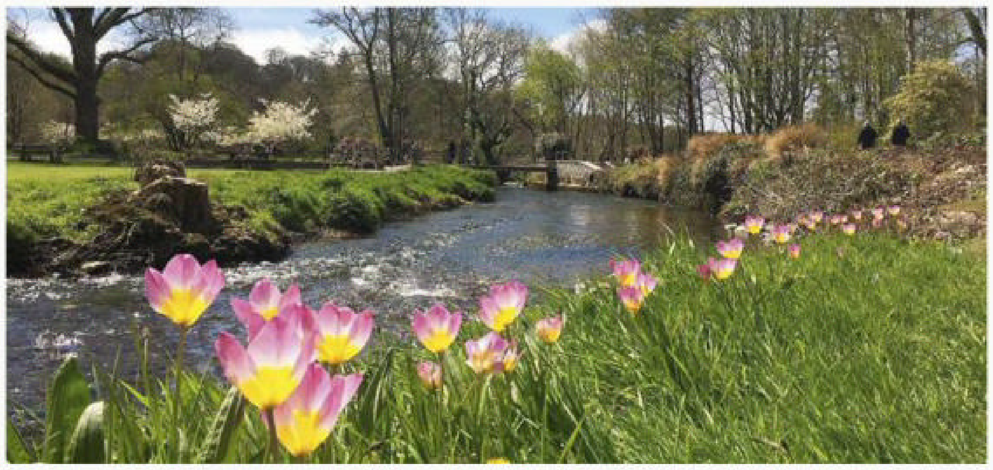
Spetchley, Worcester WR5 1RS | 01905 345106 | spetchleygardens.co.uk



10 BLARNEY CASTLE

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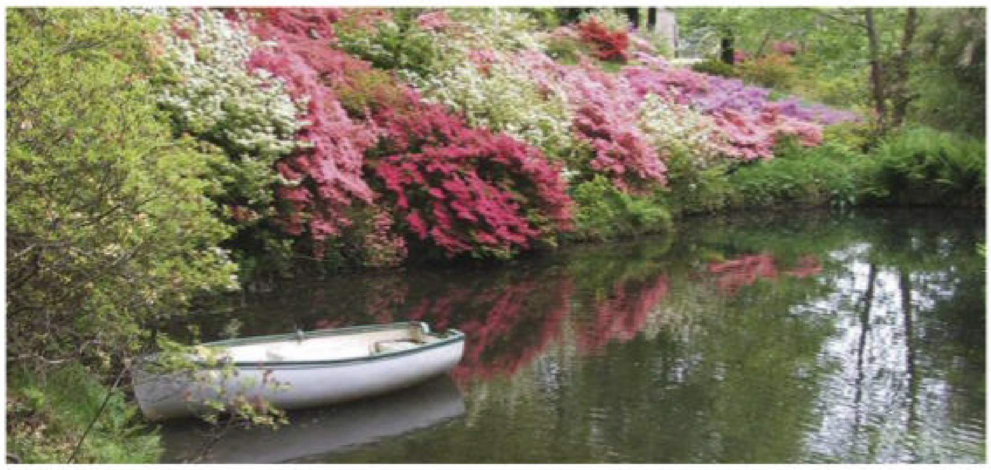
Blarney, Cork, Ireland | +353 21 438 5252 | blarneycastle.ie



11 LUKESLAND GARDENS

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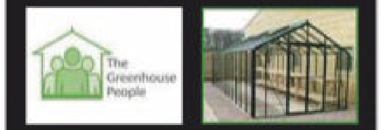

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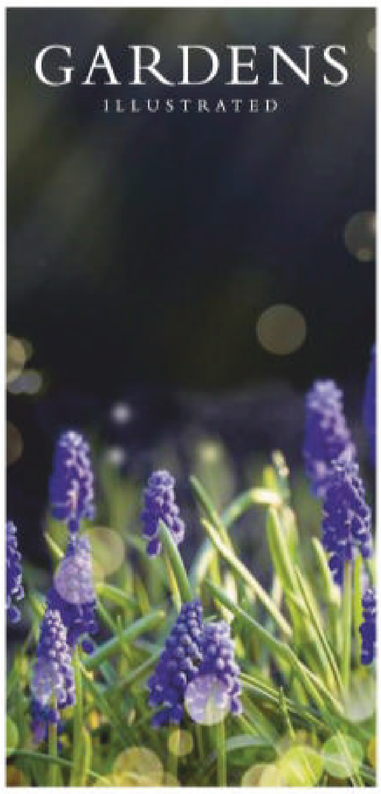

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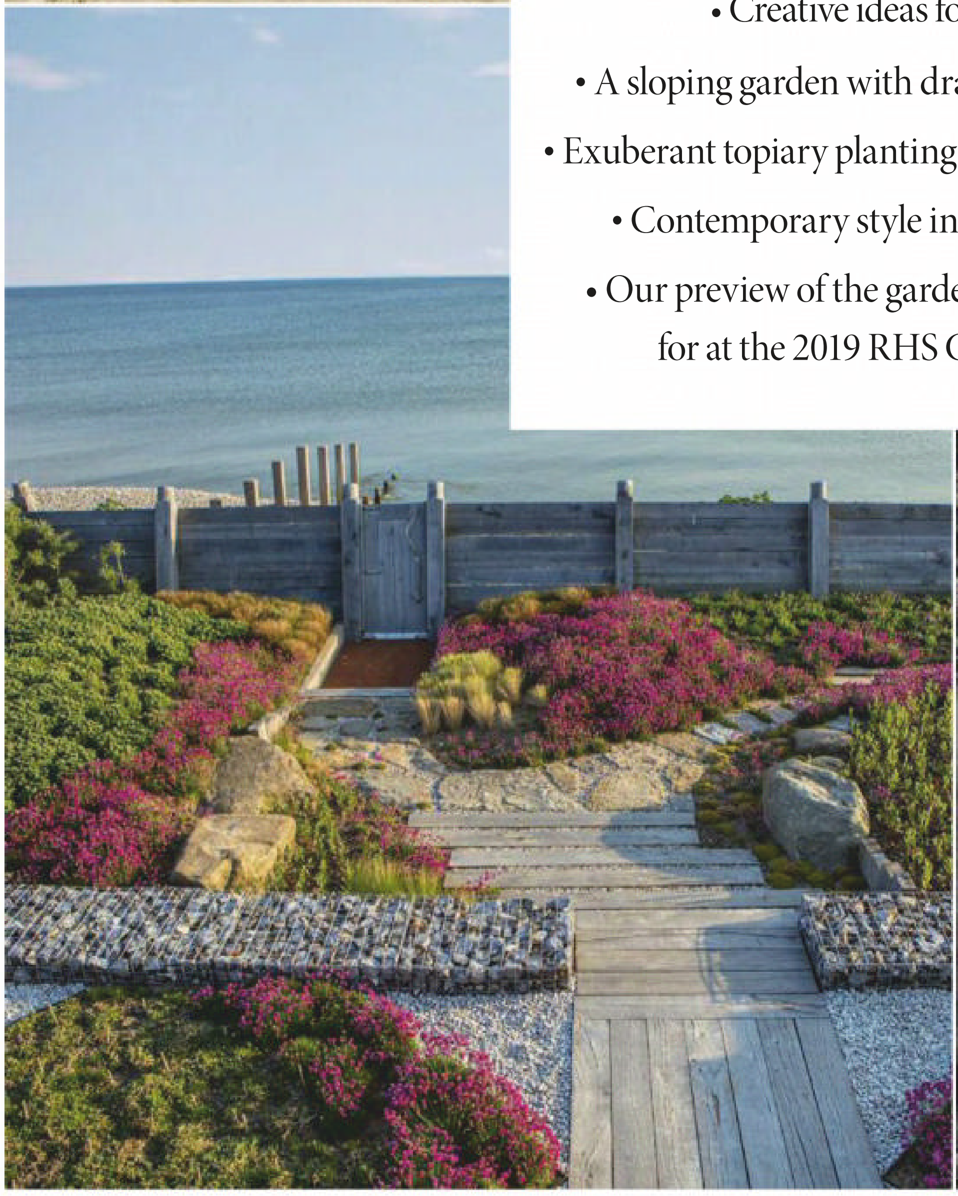
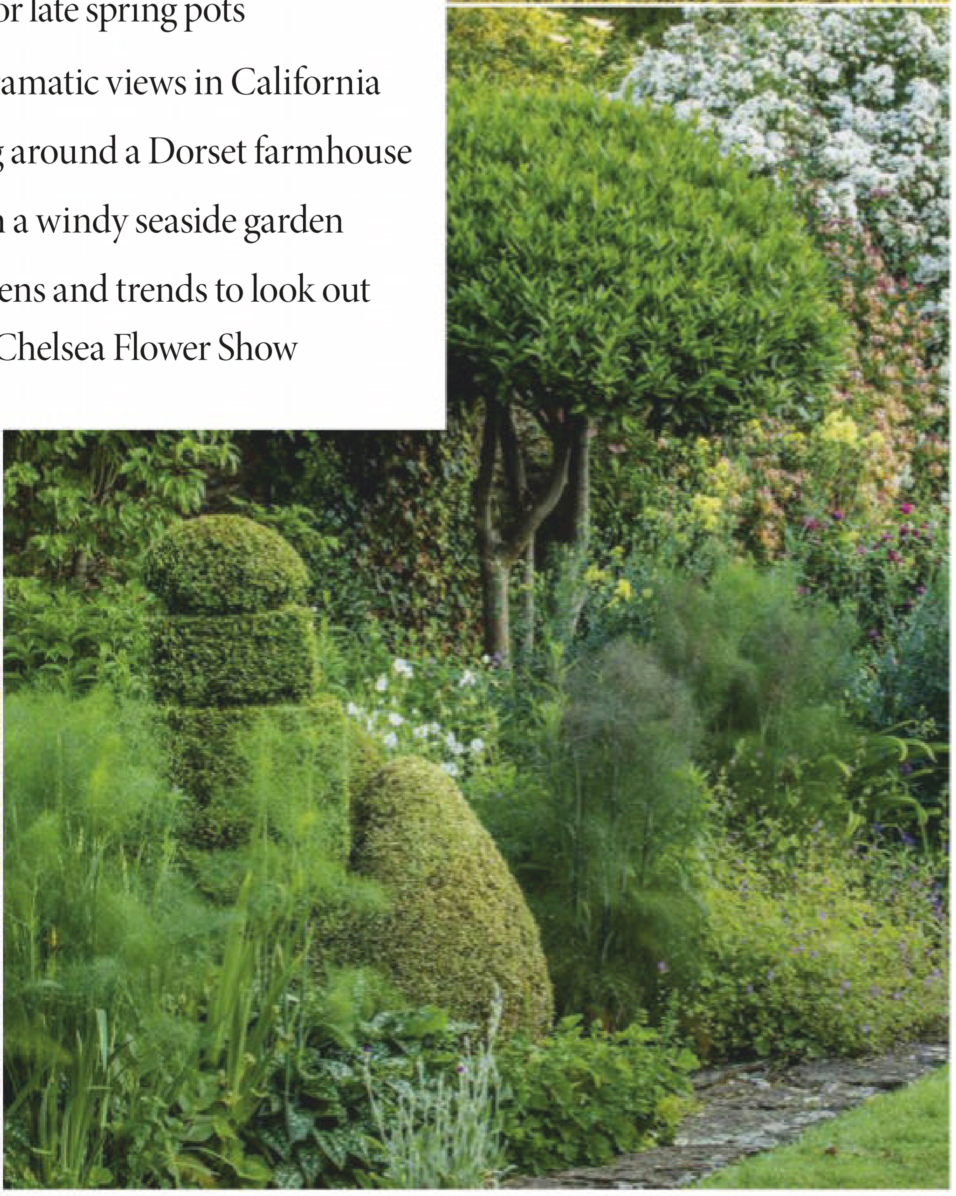
- Our preview of the gardens and trends to look out for at the 2019 RHS Chelsea Flower Show





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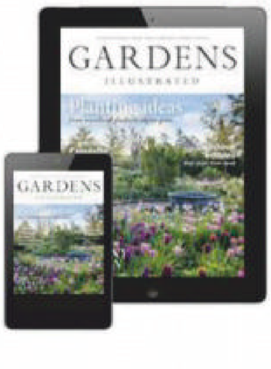

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HOUSEPLANTS

The Great Indoors

Crassulas are easy houseplants to look after, just so long as you grow them in bright light and aren't tempted to overwater

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**

Crassula make extremely good houseplants. They are easy to grow and, provided you allow them enough light and don't overwater them, they look fabulous but don't need a lot of care. The genus is quite varied and includes annual, deciduous, tuberous and aquatic plants. They are found all over the world with approximately 95 species growing in South Africa. They are more diverse than any other succulent group with varying shapes, textures, habits and colours.

Like most drought-tolerant plants, crassulas have physically adapted to inhabiting unforgiving environments. They use their leaves to store water, which is what gives them their succulent, fleshy appearance. But when it comes to limiting water loss, crassulas have another trick: a process known as crassulacean acid metabolism, or CAM for short. Normally in photosynthesis, plants take in CO_2 during the day through their stomata (pores in the leaves) and lose water while these pores are open. In CAM plants, the stomata open only at night, when CO_2 is taken in and stored as crassulacean acids. During the day these acids are broken down and the CO_2 is used in the photosynthetic cycle. This mechanism means that crassulas and other CAM plants lose considerably less water while still being able to photosynthesise normally during the day. All of which makes them an ideal plant for a new houseplant enthusiast, as you can happily forget to water them for a little while without it becoming a problem.

Crassula ovata and *Crassula arborescens* are the most popular species and are the easiest to grow indoors. *Crassula ovata* is an evergreen shrub that grows up to two metres in height. The succulent leaves are glossy, in various shades of green and are arranged in opposite pairs. *Crassula arborescens* has strikingly grey-blue, silvery foliage with a reddish, purple margin. Reaching a height of two to three metres, it is very thick and fleshy and has distinct freckles on the upper surface of each leaf. More unusual crassulas worth growing are *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana* 'Contorta' (known as the jade necklace vine), which works well grown in a hanging pot with its long trailing stems of leaves up to 15cm long that look like dreadlocks or tardigrades, and *Crassula tetragona* (the miniature pine tree), which has needle-like succulent foliage that is apple green. It grows up to around a metre.

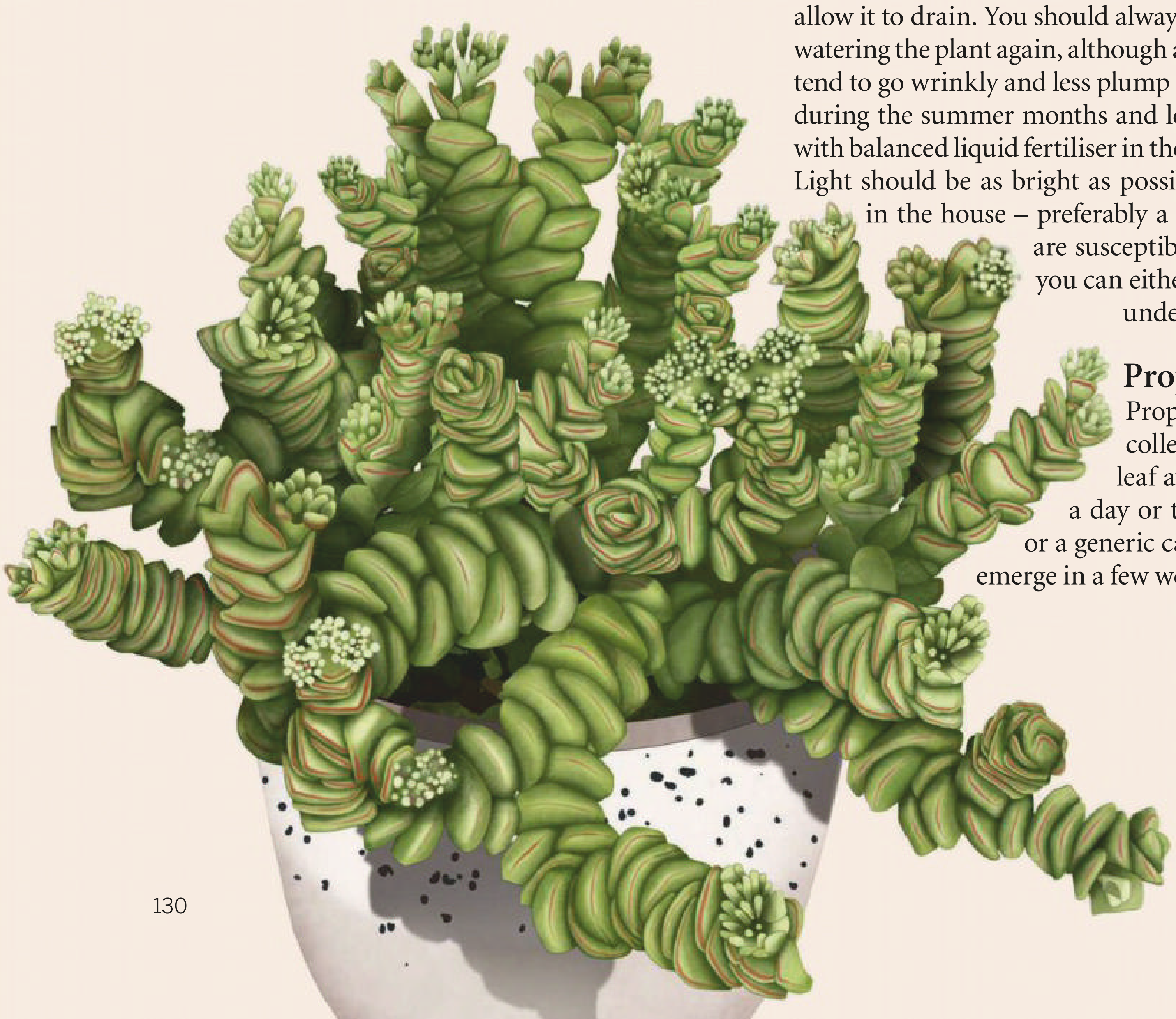
Cultivation

Crassulas need a free-draining, coarse growing media. For best results I always use a rich compost, such as John Innes No3, and mix this with coir, perlite and a lot of grit. The most important thing to remember is not to overwater as they are prone to rotting as a result. To water, always submerge the pot completely in a sink of water for at least 15 minutes but up to an hour, fully saturating the soil and then allow it to drain. You should always wait until the soil dries out completely before watering the plant again, although also keep an eye on their succulent leaves, which tend to go wrinkly and less plump when they need watering. I do this once a week during the summer months and less often in the winter. Feed crassulas sparsely with balanced liquid fertiliser in the growing season, which is early to midsummer. Light should be as bright as possible, so try to place them in the brightest spot in the house – preferably a south-facing window. Note that all succulents are susceptible to mealybugs and aphids. If you spot them, you can either pick them off by hand or gently rub them off under the tap or with a small paintbrush.

Propagation

Propagating crassulas is a great way to add to your collection. Take leaf cuttings by gently breaking the leaf away from the stem and leave to callus over for a day or two. Then, pop in a propagation tray of sand, or a generic cacti mix, on a bright windowsill. Roots should emerge in a few weeks, although they can be slow to establish. □

CRASSULA RUPESTRIS SUBSP. *MARNIERIANA* 'CONTORTA'



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Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.

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